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A
SHORT VIEW
OF THE
HISTORY
OF THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

FROM ITS
FIRST ESTABLISHMENT TO THE PRESENT CENTURY.

BY THE REV. JOSEPH REEVE.

VOL. I.

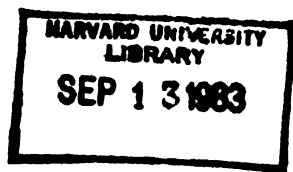
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CONTENTS.

CENTURY I.

	SEC'T. PAGE
Character of the Christian Church,	I. 19
Progress of the Church,	II. 24
Virtues of the Primitive Christians,	III. 28
Council of Jerusalem,	IV. 30
Martyrdom of St. James the Less,	V. 34
First Persecution under Nero,	VI. 36
Destruction of Jerusalem,	VII. 39
Second Persecution under Domitian,	VIII. 42
Disunion of the Christians at Corinth,	IX. 45

CENTURY II.

Third Persecution under Trajan,	I. 48
St. Ignatius before Trajan,	II. 50
Epistles of St. Ignatius,	III. 52
Martyrdom of St. Ignatius,	IV. 56
Apology of St. Justin,	V. 57
Extent and Unity of the Church,	VI. 60
Fourth Persecution under M. Aurelius,	VII. 64
Martyrdom of St. Polycarp,	VIII. 66
The Thundering Legion,	IX. 68
Martyrs of Lyons,	X. 71
Other Martyrs of Gaul,	XI. 73
Lucius, King of Great Britain,	XII. 77

IV

Progress of Christianity in Great Britain, . . .	XIII. 80
View of the Catholic Doctrine in the Second Century, . . .	XIV. 83

CENTURY III.

Fifth Persecution under Severus,	I. 88
Tertullian,	II. 91
Sixth Persecution under Maximin,	III. 95
Seventh Persecution under Decius,	IV. 98
Origen,	V. 100
Internal Troubles of the Church,	VI. 104
Decision of St. Stephen,	VII. 106
Eighth Persecution under Valerian,	VIII. 110
Martyrdom of St. Lawrence,	IX. 113
Ninth Persecution under Aurelian.	X. 116

CENTURY IV.

Tenth Persecution under Dioclesian,	I. 120
Abdication of Dioclesian and Maximinian,	II. 124
Triumph of Constantine,	III. 127
Triumph of Religion,	IV. 131
Holy Fathers of the Desert,	V. 135
Baptism of Constantine,	VI. 140
Arianism,	VII. 146
General Council of Nice,	VIII. 149
Invention of the Cross,	IX. 154
Intrigues of the Arians,	X. 157
Death of Constantine,	XI. 162
Violence of the Arians,	XII. 165
Council of Sardica,	XIII. 168
Tyranny of Constantius,	XIV. 172
Persecution of Constantius,	XV. 175
Julian the Apostate,	XVI. 182
Valens, the Arian Emperor,	XVII. 189
Theodosius, Emperor,	XVIII. 191

	SEC'N.	PAGE
Second General Council,	XIX.	198
Usurpation of Maximus,	XX.	200
Victories of Theodosius,	XXI.	203
View of the Fourth Century,	XXII.	208

CENTURY V.

Alaric, King of the Goths,	I.	213
Alaric invades Italy,	II.	215
St. John Chrysostom,	III.	220
Theodosius the Younger and Pulcheria,	IV.	225
Schism of the Donatists,	V.	228
Pelagianism,	VI.	232
Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople,	VII.	233
Third General Council at Ephesus,	VIII.	242
Saints Germanus and Lupus,	IX.	247
State of Britain,	X.	250
Desolation of the Western Empire,	XI.	254
Dissolution of the Western Empire,	XII.	259
Eutyches,	XIII.	264
General Council of Chalcedon,	XIV.	268
Fathers of the Fifth Century,	XV.	272

CENTURY VI.

Conversion of the Franks,	I.	278
St. Benedict,	II.	281
Reduction of Africa,	III.	285
Fifth General Council at Constantinople,	IV.	289
Gothic Kings of the West,	V.	295
Heptarchy of England,	VI.	299
St. Austin, the Apostle of England,	VII.	302

CENTURY VII.

St. Austin's conference with British Bishops,	I.	307
Conversion of England,	II.	313

	SEC'X. PAGE
Exaltation of the Cross,	III. 310
Desolation of the Oriental Churches,	IV. 322
Celebration of Easter,	V. 326
State of the English Church,	VI. 329
Sixth General Council,	VII. 333
Celibacy of the Clergy,	VIII. 340

CENTURY VIII.

Extinction of the African Church,	I. 345
Heresy of the Iconoclasts,	II. 349
Germany receives the Faith,	III. 353
Pepin, King of France,	IV. 358
Liberality of King Pepin to the Holy See,	V. 362
Violence of the Iconoclasts,	VI. 366
Second General Council of Nice,	VII. 369
Coronation of Charlemagne,	VIII. 373

CENTURY IX.

Death of Charlemagne,	I. 379
Egbert, sole Monarch of England,	II. 382
State of Religion under the Heptarchy,	III. 385
View of the English Saxon Church,	IV. 391
Progress of Religion in the North,	V. 395
State of Religion in the Western Empire,	VI. 397
Extinction of Iconoclasm,	VII. 401
Conversion of the Bulgarians,	VIII. 406
Intrusion of Photius,	IX. 411
Proceedings of Photius,	X. 415
Downfall of Photius,	XI. 420
End of Photius,	XII. 424
Triumph of the Church over error,	XIII. 430
England ravaged by the Danes,	XIV. 434
Alfred the Great,	XV. 438
Achievements of King Alfred,	XVI. 442

CENTURY X.

Rollo, first Duke of Normandy,	I. 447
State of Religion in England,	II. 451
St. Dunstan, Primate of England,	III. 455
Expulsion of the incontinent Clergy,	VI. 461
Fall and Penitence of King Edgar,	V. 467
Extinction of the Carlovingian race of Kings,	VI. 472
View of the Tenth Century,	VII. 477

CENTURY XI.

England again invaded by the Danes,	I. 481
Edmund Ironside and King Canute,	II. 485
Coronation of Edward Confessor,	III. 489
Greek Schism,	IV. 492
Revival of Discipline,	V. 497
Heresy of Berengarius,	VI. 501
Norman Conquest,	VII. 505
Despotism of the Normans,	VIII. 510
Gregory VII., and Henry IV. of Germany,	IX. 515
Henry, defender of simony and schism,	X. 519
Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury,	XI. 525
First Crusade,	XII. 531
Jerusalem delivered,	XIII. 536

PREFACE.

MYSTERIOUS are the decrees of God with respect to man, often slow in their operation, but always certain in their effect. Man had lost himself by sinning, God promised him a Redeemer, but a period of about four thousand years elapsed before that promise was fulfilled. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, were originally created in a state of innocence, and were finally designed by their bountiful Creator for the supernatural enjoyment of his glory in Heaven. They had the garden of Eden, a paradise of earthly delights, allotted them for a temporary abode till their translation into the heavenly mansions of everlasting bliss. They were endowed with free will, that they might have the merit of obeying and honoring their Creator by choice: for the merit of their obedience they had but one easy precept to observe, and that was, to abstain from the fruit of a certain tree, under the penalty of death.

Such was their primitive situation. A fallen angel, envious of their happiness, resolved to attempt their ruin. He entered the garden in a serpent's form, addressed himself to Eve in a most artful manner, and by deceitful assurances at last persuaded her to eat the forbidden fruit. She prevailed on Adam to eat of it also. By this deliberate act of disobedience, they both incurred the penalty denounced

against it; in vain did they try to shift the blame from one to another; they were driven out of paradise, loaded with shame and remorse, and condemned to drag out life in painful labor, till death should reduce their bodies into dust again, out of which they had been first formed. The gate of Heaven was moreover shut against them, and against their whole posterity, until full atonement should be made for their transgression. Great was their affliction for the evil they had done; but God was pleased to comfort them with the promise, that the time would come when the woman's offspring should crush the serpent's head.*

Human nature being thus tainted with sin in its very root, a vicious race of mortals soon began to spring up and multiply. The corruption of their hearts and morals provoked the vengeance of an insulted Deity. God deluged† the earth with one universal flood, and in the watery abyss buried every living creature that was not in Noah's Ark. Of all mankind only eight persons escaped destruction; these re-peopled the earth with new inhabitants, not better than the former. In the space of a single century their progeny became too numerous for the spot they inhabited. Necessity compelled them to separate in quest of other settlements. But before their separation they undertook to build‡ a tower in defiance of the Almighty, should he ever visit them with a second deluge; it is called the tower of Babel. God baffled their insolent undertaking by confounding their language.

The dispersed colonies being no longer awed by the presence of their patriarchs, most lamentably fell into vice and ignorance, forgot the God who made them, and paid idolatrous worship to fancied deities of their own invention. In the course of three hundred years the generality of them

* Gen. c. iii., v. 15.

† A. M. 1656.

‡ A. M. 1757.

became blind idolaters; few retained the principles of true religion, and they were chiefly of the branch of Heber. Among these faithful believers was Abraham, the tenth in lineal descent from Noah, and the sixth from Heber. This extraordinary man was settled with his father Thare, in Ur, a city of the Chaldeans, when God appeared* to him, and commanded him to go out of that country, and to seek the land of Chanaan. In obedience to the divine call, Abraham immediately departed with Sarah his wife, and Lot his brother's son. After his arrival in Chanaan, God appeared to him again and again, on different occasions, promised to put his posterity in possession of all that country, and finally assured him, that "in his seed all nations of the earth should be blessed."†

Abraham in his new settlement became very rich both in lands and cattle, all which fell to his son Isaac, and after him to his grandson Jacob. Jacob, in a heavenly vision, was commanded to take the name of Israel, from which circumstance his descendants are called Israelites. This holy patriarch in the course of a long life experienced many laborious trials of his fortitude and patience. The supposed death of his favorite son Joseph was a subject of bitter grief to him for many years. Joyful tidings at last of his being not only alive, but governor of Egypt, wiped away his tears; at Joseph's invitation he removed his whole family from the land of Chanaan, and went into Egypt,‡ where he spent the last seventeen years of his life. When confined to his bed, and ready to expire, he called his sons together, and pronounced over each one of them a special blessing. The prophetic words he uttered over Juda are remarkable: they express, that when the sceptre shall be wrested from the hand of Juda, and a leader of his race shall fail, then

* A. M. 2083.

† Gen. c. xxii. v. 23.

‡ A. M. 2772

shall come the promised Messiah, and he shall be the expectation of nations.*

The Israelites in Egypt enjoyed every earthly comfort as long as Joseph lived. But after his death they experienced cruel treatment. Their increasing progeny in fact gave great uneasiness to the Egyptians. With a view of breaking down their constitutions, and of lessening their numbers, the king ordered them to be employed in the public works, to be loaded like slaves with heavy burdens, and all their male issue to be strangled in the birth. Under this slavery the wretched Israelites groaned for a length of years, when God was pleased at last to listen to their moans, and to provide for their delivery. Moses, the great grandson of Levi, was divinely commissioned for the execution of this important work. Supported by the powerful arm of God, he defeated all the efforts made by Pharaoh to prevent his undertaking, collected all his people together, led them forth into the wilderness, and made the best of his way towards the Red Sea. Pharaoh pursued him with a numerous army; in that critical situation Moses boldly advanced to the water's edge, stretched out his hand by the command of God, and behold, the waters of the deep instantly divided and opened to him a dry passage to the opposite shore. Pharaoh with his host attempted to follow, the waters closed, and every Egyptian perished.†

The Israelites had hitherto been guided in their religious and moral conduct by the law of nature, and the traditions of their patriarchs; they now received a written law, which God himself delivered to Moses in an awful manner upon Mount Sinai. It is called the old or the Mosaic law: besides the ten commandments, which have been since confirmed by our blessed Saviour, it contained many ordinances,

* Gen. c. xlix. v. 10.

† A. M. 2512.

both of a religious and civil nature, peculiar to the Hebrew people: these special ordinances have given way to the universal law of grace, and they cease to bind any longer. From the mountain of Sinai, which is in Arabia, the Israelites, under the command of Moses and Aaron, continued their journey through the desert, towards the promised land of Chanaan. Their battles and their conquests, their successes and defeats under the judges, the kings, and other leaders of the Jewish nation, from Moses to Simon, the last of his illustrious brothers, the Machabees, containing a period of thirteen hundred and near fifty years, are recorded in the Holy Bible.

Simon was succeeded* in the supreme command by his son John, and after him by his grandson Aristobulus, who assumed the crown and title of king. Alexander his brother reigned after him, and left two sons, Hircanus and Aristobulus, competitors for the sceptre. Civil discord divided the force of the country, and enabled the Romans to make a complete conquest of it. Pompey reduced it to an aristocratic state, and Mark Antony not long after obtained a grant from the Roman senate for Herod, an Idumean, to be crowned king of Judea. The Jews were now no longer governed by a prince of Juda's race; the translation of the royal power to an alien marked the time, which the patriarch Jacob had specified, for the coming of the Messiah.

In the thirty-seventh year of king Herod's reign, and about the four thousandth of the world, Jesus Christ our Redeemer was born of the Virgin Mary, in Behtlehem, a city of Judea, as God himself had long promised in holy writ by the mouth of his Prophets.

God the Son, the second Person of the most adorable Trinity, became man not only to redeem our souls from sin,

*A. M. 3861.

but also to teach us the way to heaven by the practice of good works. He has done the first by dying upon the cross; he has provided for the second, by revealing to us a religion the most sublime in its belief, the most awful in its mysteries, the most holy in its precepts, the most rational in its practice, and the most comfortable in its promises. This is the religion, upon the principles of which is formed the Christian Church, that is, an universal congregation of true believers, the professed followers of Jesus Christ, our Lord God.

The Church of Christ, as St. Gregory remarks,* is frequently called by the Evangelists the kingdom of God; a kingdom purely spiritual, not founded by military achievements upon the basis of worldly power, or human policy, but upon the infallible word of God, by the humility of the cross, by the grace and virtue of Jesus Christ. The end of its institution is to enlighten and sanctify mankind; its empire is that of justice and truth. Christ reigns over the minds of men by faith, and he reigns in the hearts of men by charity, which teaches us to love God above all things, and our neighbor as ourselves.

To trace the rise and progress of the Catholic Church through a series of eighteen hundred years, is the comprehensive subject of ecclesiastical history. It comprehends a variety of arduous undertakings for the propagation of the Gospel, a succession of interesting events, a multiplicity of persecutions, of combats and struggles, which the Church has had to undergo in every quarter of the globe against the rude attacks of Pagans, Jews, Heretics, and Schismatics, who have never ceased to oppose her progress, and to assail the integrity of her faith. In the execution of a task so multifarious and so extensive in its object, some writers have spun out their narrative into so voluminous a length, while

* Hom. xi. in Evan.

others have thrown their materials together in so confused and discouraging a manner, that although they copy truth, few readers have the inclination to purchase, or the leisure to peruse their bulky compilations.

Other authors, not less to their own discredit than to that of history, have written volumes upon a different plan, and have wasted much of their time and study to disguise and puzzle ancient truth. By mutilating or curtailing texts and records, by misinterpreting or by falsifying the authorities they quote, they dress up a plausible story of their own, and thus lead their readers into a labyrinth of pernicious errors. The facts they state are frequently misrepresented, their assertions rash, and their inferences false. This charge lies heavy upon the centuriators of Magdeburg: it lies more or less heavy upon the many writers of that school, who have ventured to exercise their talents upon the subject of ecclesiastical history. From this charge even the celebrated Abbe Fleury is not exempt.

This smooth historiographer of suspicious memory is more upon his guard than Illyricus the centuriator, more temperate in his language, and more refined in the turn of his expressions, though not less dangerous in the tenor of his maxims. Under the modest declaration of writing purely to edify, he passes the most insulting censures upon the highest authorities, when adverse to his own private system, and peremptorily pronounces almost every thing wrong in point of discipline, which has not the practice of wise antiquity for its sanction. As if no change of times and circumstances can ever authorize a change of discipline for the spiritual benefit of the faithful, and for the encouragement of virtue, as if the Church had either lost or abused the power, which she received from her divine Founder to govern and instruct, or as if she were no longer

guided by that unerring Spirit, which by Christ is promised to remain with her through every age to the end of time,* Monsieur Fleury has the assurance to assert, that through the undue influence of her school-divines, through the forgeries of her librarians, through the ignorance, in fine, and supine negligence of her bishops, the Church has fatally deviated from the path of wise antiquity. The acrimony, which he expresses at every turn against the sovereign Pontiff, or what he malignantly calls the court of Rome, flashes upon the sight through his whole composition. The sarcasms and insolent reflections, with which his Discourses and his History abound, can have no other tendency than to strip the holy Father of his spiritual prerogatives, to depreciate the pre-eminence of the Apostolic See, to encourage the cabals of ecclesiastical democracy, and to rob the faithful of that filial respect, which is due to the vicar of Jesus Christ. What the Abbe's intention may have been, we presume not to judge, but of his History sound critics have pronounced, that in many instances it as strongly favors the erroneous principles of modern times, as if it had been written for the purpose. "Monsieur Fleury," says the learned author of *Jansenisme Demoli*, "is their most ardent friend,"† speaking of the Jansenists: "he is the Matthew Paris of the present age."‡

For the verification of these remarks, the reader is referred to a small Treatise, printed with license at Mechlin, in 1733, and written by the R. F. Baudouin de Housta of the Order of St. Augustin: it has for title, "*La mauvaise Foi de Monsieur L'Abbe Fleury prouvee par plusieurs passages des S. S. Peres, des Conciles, et d'autres auteurs ecclesiastiques, qu'il a omis, tronques ou infidellement traduits dans son Histoire.*"

* Matt. c. 23. John c. 16. † Part ii, page 152. ‡ Ibid, page 165.

In a country like this,* where the Catholic religion is not the religion of the state, where the establishment of the national Church has been raised by human hands upon the basis of the civil power, and where the received laws of ecclesiastical discipline are allowed to have no other force than what they derive from the political legislature, little is the need, and less is the encouragement for those, who are content with the present state of things, to pry into what passed in the Church before the days of John Huss, or of Martin Luther. Upon the credit of slanderous publications, composed by the first reformers to color their secession from the Catholic Church, they take it for granted, without further examination, that the Church had actually fallen into idolatry, and wanted a reform. Whether that really was the case, or whether that could be the case, consistently with Christ's promise to the Church,† few enquire; thus the real principles and doctrines of the Catholic religion remain in a manner unknown to all, who are not of that communion. The generality of readers rest contented with the scraps of spurious information, which they fortuitously meet with in the works of political and of party writers. Upon the bare assertion of a Fox, the romancing martyrologist, of an apostate Jewel, of a Burnet, a Hume, a Robertson, a Guthrie, and of such popular retailers of religious calumny, they give implicit credit to the fictitious absurdities, maliciously cast upon a religion, which they have been taught in the very nursery to decry and execrate, without knowing what it is.

To remove the veil of misrepresentation, and to show, by facts, what the Roman Catholic Church for eighteen centuries has uniformly believed and taught, this historical epitome was first undertaken, and is now offered to the

* England.

† Matt. c. xvi. v. 18.

public. It is executed upon the same plan as the "Historical Abridgment of the Old and New Testament," published some years ago by the same author. It is divided into centuries, and the centuries are subdivided into paragraphs, with a chronological date of the most remarkable events. In the statement and relation of facts, truth alone is the author's aim, for the attainment of which he has had recourse to the authentic records, that lay within his reach; and where he could not have that advantage, he has impartially followed those authors, who stand foremost in repute for genuine information and veracity.

The author has confined his view to the one holy Catholic Church, which all Christians profess to believe, as often as they piously recite the Apostle's Creed. This is the Church of Christ; for Christ has but one Church. This Church he has built upon a rock, and promised to preserve inviolate against all the infernal powers.* To say then, that the holy Catholic Church has ever fallen from the purity of her primitive faith into any error of doctrine, is, in other words to say, that Jesus Christ has either broken or forgotten his promise, that he has deceived the world in promising infallibility to his Church, and consequently that he meant not, or could not perform, what he promised. Nor on any better ground can it be pretended, that any order of men, however high in authority, whether ecclesiastical or civil, is empowered to alter or annul any one of Christ's institutions, to reform his doctrine, to rescind his commandments, or to blot out so much as a single iota from his holy law.†

* Matt. c. xvi, v. 18.

† Matt. c. v, v. 19.

THE
HISTORY
OF THE
CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

CENTURY I.

SECTION I.

Character of the Christian Church.

(A. D. 30.) BEFORE entering upon the history of the Church, it may neither be deemed superfluous, nor foreign from the purpose, to state briefly what the Church is. By the word Church we here understand an assemblage or congregation of people, called together and united into one body, under one supreme visible head, in the profession of one and the same faith. The establishment of this Church is clearly foretold by the prophet Isaiah, when he says,* that "in the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it: and many people shall say, Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us his ways. For the law shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." By this memorable prophecy we are informed, that in the latter days, when the time of the old law should be past, the

* C. ii., v. 2.

house of the God of Jacob was to be built as it were upon a mountain above the top of all mountains, visible to the whole world, and open to receive all nations of the earth, that should flock to it; that from thence the new law was to come forth, and the word of the Lord to teach us his ways. From Sion and from Jerusalem the word of God was to be first announced; but the house of the God of Jacob was to raise its lofty top upon a mountain above the hills, in the capital seat of the Roman empire.

In the history of the Christian Church, we manifestly see how this ancient prediction of Isaiah is literally fulfilled. The sacred marks, that distinguish this mystical house of God, are so clearly specified, that no one can possibly mistake them. This house is but one, and it is the house of our Lord; this house is visible, being prepared on the top of the mountains; this house is universal, it receives all nations within its precincts; this house in fine is holy, because from it comes forth the law, and the word of God, teaching the rules and doctrine of holy life. The founder of this house or church, which is so characteristically described by the prophet, is our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of the most High, who shall reign in the house of Jacob for ever.* From Jerusalem the Christian Church first began, for there Christ our Lord preached the word of eternal life, there he suffered, there by his death upon the cross he consummated the work of our redemption. Being desirous that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth and be saved, he commissioned his Apostles to go and teach all nations the observance of all his precepts and commands.† For the observance of right order, and the establishment of ecclesiastical government, he gave a special commission to St. Peter, by which he made him

* Luke, c. i, v. 20.

† Mat. c. xxviii, v. 20.

head of all the rest, and appointed him supreme pastor to feed his whole flock, both lambs and sheep.* This was the completion of that promise, which he made him before his passion.† Because thou art Peter, that is to say a rock, said our Saviour to him, upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against her. Here we see a promise of indefectibility made by Christ himself to his Church, which he afterwards confirmed, by assuring his Apostles, that he and the Holy Spirit of his Father should remain with them and teach them all truth to the end of the world.‡ St. Peter, being thus appointed to govern the Church after the Ascension of his divine master into Heaven, directed his course to Rome, where he fixed his apostolical chair, and sealed his faith by a glorious martyrdom under Nero. From this singularly privileged Apostle, the subsequent Bishops of Rome, in one uninterrupted line of succession, inherit the spiritual supremacy, which unites the whole Catholic Church of Christ into one compact body of faithful believers, under one head: this body is the one, the holy, the Catholic or universal, the Roman, in fine, and apostolic Church. These distinctive marks, so clearly pointed out in the inspired writings, characterised the Church of Christ from the earliest period of her divine institution, they characterised her through every succeeding age, they characterise her still.

The design of her institution being no other than to establish the true worship of God by the overthrow of idolatry, and to sanctify a chosen people for everlasting life by the purest virtues of religion, we are not to wonder if Satan, the jealous enemy of human happiness, should exert his utmost powers to obstruct the benevolent design. In the common course of events it was necessary that persecu-

* John, c. xxi, v. 17.

† Mat. c. xvi, v. 18.

‡ Mat. John.

tions, heresies, schisms, and domestic scandals should happen; but Jesus Christ has assured us, that all the united powers of Hell never shall prevail against his Church. The Pagan tyrants of the earth may rage; the courage and patience of her martyrs will triumph and multiply. Heresies may start up in various forms, and for a while seduce thousands into error; they will at length sink back again into the dark abyss from whence they first emerged. Guided by the Spirit of Truth, and confirmed in the unity of her belief,* the Church will ever successfully oppose to their impotent attempts the promises of her divine Founder, the antiquity of her faith, the consent of nations, the splendor of her hierarchy under one supreme Pastor, the visible successor of St. Peter, the holy severity of her discipline, the catalogue of her Saints, the written evidence, in fine, of her doctors, and the decisions of her Councils. Schisms may at times perplex and divide the faithful; the Church by her authority will either close the breach, or separate the refractory members from her communion. The vicious lives of many of her children may contradict and disgrace the character of their Christian profession, they may violate her laws, they may insult her authority, and invade her sacred rights: they never will be able to overturn her ministry, to shake her hierarchy, or to alter her doctrine. She will never cease to warn sinners of their duty, to correct, to instruct, and direct mankind in the way of salvation. By her persevering zeal for God's honor, by the force of her exhortations, by the solemnity of her public service, by the morality of her precepts, and by her practice of the evangelical counsels, she will continue to prepare souls for Heaven, while she exhibits to the world a rich assemblage of the most heroic virtues.

* Eph. c. iv.

I have chosen you, said our blessed Lord to his Apostles,* and I have appointed you, that you go and bear fruit, and that your fruit remain. If the world shall hate you, remember it has first hated me; if it has persecuted me, it will likewise persecute you. But lose not courage; I have overcome the world. How Christ has conquered, and how he continues still to conquer, we learn from the faithful records of ecclesiastical history. To convey this Christian knowledge in as clear and succinct a manner, as the extent of it will allow, is the design of this short view. To trace the marks, which distinguish the holy Catholic Church through every age of her existence, is an object the most interesting and important to all who are desirous to know and follow the living guide, which Christ has appointed to direct them in the way to eternal life. Protestant divines agree with Catholics on the necessity of having a living guide to salvation, and of holding with the Catholic Church. The learned Doctor Pearson, Bishop of Chester, in his Exposition of the Apostles' Creed, says, that "the necessity of believing the holy Catholic Church appears in this, that Christ has appointed it as the only way to eternal life." Calvin affirms,† "that out of the bosom of the visible Church no remission of sins, no salvation is to be hoped for." His disciple Beza asserts,‡ "that there is only one true Church; that there always was, and always will be a Church, out of which there is no salvation." The Protestants of Switzerland and of Scotland,§ in their professions of faith, say the same thing in almost the same words. "We firmly believe," say they, "that there was from the beginning, that there now is, and that to the end of the world there will always be one Church, which is the Catholic, that is, the universal Church, out of which Church there is neither life

* John, c. xv.

† Inst. L. iv. c. 1.

‡ Conf. Fidei.

§ 1563.

nor everlasting happiness." The Church of England admits the same doctrine, in admitting the Athanasian Creed, which shuts the gate of salvation against all those who hold not the Catholic faith whole and entire. For this faith is but one;* it admits of no division; without this faith it is impossible to please God.† But whoever believes not, shall be condemned, says our Saviour Christ.‡ For God requires not only the homage of our actions, but of our very thoughts, of our free will and judgment in submitting to his revealed truths. By this humble submission we become true adorers of the Father in spirit and in truth.§

SECTION II.

Progress of the Church.

(A. D. 34.) On the day of Pentecost, ten days after the Ascension of our Lord, the Apostles, being indued with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, entered upon their mission, and in the streets of Jerusalem promulgated the law of Jesus Christ. No less than three thousand souls were converted by St. Peter's first discourse. Subsequent miracles confirmed the truths he announced. Miracles are speaking signs of the divine power; they are no where seen but in the Catholic Church. The number of the faithful daily increased; the Jewish rulers grew jealous, they dreaded the abolition of the Mosaic law, and of their own consequence: by threats and penalties they strove to reduce the Apostles to a timid silence. Men, full of God, knew not what it was to fear. Heedless of chains and prisons, they persisted in

* Eph. c. vi. † Heb. c. xi. v. 6. ‡ Mark, c. xvi. v. 16. § John, c. iv. v. 23.

proclaiming the divinity of Jesus Christ. A violent persecution ensued; Stephen, one of the seven deacons, fell a sacrifice to its fury, and is honored as the first Martyr of the Church. The other deacons fled from the scene of blood into the adjacent country of Judea and Samaria. There they preached, and many of the Samaritans embraced the faith of Christ. The Apostles remained with their new converts in Jerusalem: they took that opportunity of establishing James, the son of Alpheus, the first bishop of that holy city.

The persecution still continued with great violence, chiefly at the instigation of Saul, a fiery zealot and enthusiastic stickler for the traditions of his forefathers. This man, not satisfied with the cruelties he had committed in Jerusalem, petitioned and received a commission from the High-priest to seize and drag to prison all the Christians he might find in the town of Damascus. Thither he hastened, breathing nothing but threats and bloodshed against the followers of Christ. It happened, as he approached the town, that a sudden flash of light struck him blind in an instant, and cast him from his horse to the ground: he heard a voice at the same time calling to him, "Saul, Saul, why dost thou persecute me?" His attendants raised him up and conducted him to the town. He passed three days in prayer without eating or drinking, when, by divine admonition, he received a visit from Ananias, a religious convert. Ananias consoled him in his distress, restored his sight, and baptized him. Saul was now changed into a new man; from being a persecutor he became an Apostle of Jesus Christ, and some time after took the name of Paul.

The persecution ceasing at Jerusalem, St. Peter made an excursion into the towns of Samaria, Judea, and Syria, as far as Antioch, where he fixed his episcopal chair. But his

zeal for the salvation of souls never let him rest long in any one place. He traversed many provinces of Asia Minor, preaching to the dispersed Jews in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia. For he confined his instructions to the Jews only, and to them he addressed his first Epistle, as we find in the testament. The Gentiles of those countries, being void of all religion themselves, gave no disturbance in religious matters to those strangers, who came to settle among them. But at Jerusalem, where the civil magistrates were all Jews, the followers of Christ were exposed to incessant difficulties and dangers. St. Peter often interrupted his distant missions, and went to visit his suffering brethren in that city. His visits gave offence to the jealous Jews; they complained of him to Herod, and Herod at their instigation caused him to be arrested and cast into prison, intending to put him to death after the Easter holydays were over. The Apostle was kept in close confinement, loaded with chains, and two centinels standing over him. But on the very night before he was to be led out to martyrdom, an angel entered the prison, loosened his chains and rescued him from the tyrant's hand.

About that time St. Paul, who had been introduced to the Apostles, was with Barnabas ordained bishop, and sent to preach among the Gentiles. Barnabas accompanied him for some time in his apostolical travels. Paul was a chosen vessel of divine grace, singularly destined to carry the name of Christ before kings, and nations, and the children of Israel. He entered the provinces of Asia, Pisidia, Pamphylia, Lycaonia, Phrygia, Galatia, and Mysia, converting thousands, as he passed, to the Christian religion. He then cast his eye on Greece. Greece had long been renowned for science, for eloquence, and the finer arts. There the Apostle resolved to introduce a more sublime and more pre-

cious knowledge, the knowledge of one only true God. His zealous labors were crowned with the success he wished: flourishing Churches arose in the great towns of Corinth, Philippi, Thessalonica, Athens, and Ephesus. From Greece he stretched his course to Rome, and carried the knowledge of Jesus Christ even into the apartments of Nero's palace.

St. Peter had already been there before him, about the year forty-four. Rome, the seat of empire, opened a communication with the most distant provinces; this induced the Apostle to remove his episcopal chair from Antioch, and to place it at Rome, wisely judging, that from the capital the light of the gospel would more quickly spread through the whole Roman empire. Some Protestapt controvertists* have ridiculously asserted against the evidence of all ancient writers,† that St. Peter never was at Rome. But others of their brethren,‡ less prejudiced or more enlightened, have fully refuted the insolent assertion.

While the two chief Apostles were thus laboring to diffuse the rays of truth through the western world, the other ten extended their zeal to the southern and eastern regions, as far as Ethiopia and India. Having composed their symbol of faith, commonly called the Apostle's Creed, all twelve set out to announce the gospel to a Pagan world. Tradition tells us, that St. Thomas preached in India, St. John in Asia Minor, St. Andrew in Scythia, St. Philip in Upper Asia, St. Bartholomew in Great Armenia, St. Matthew in Persia, St. Simon in Mesopotamia, St. Jude in Arabia, St. Matthias in Ethiopia. To what particular spots they extended their labors, we cannot say, but St. Paul assures the Colossians, that the gospel was then actually announced with great success to the whole world; and in his Epistle to the Romans,§

* Barrow, Salmasius. † St. Ignatius, St. Irenæus, St. Cyprian, Eusebius, St. Jerom. ‡ Bishop Pearson, Baratier. § C. x. v. 18.

he applies to the Apostles these words of 'the Psalmist: Their voice is gone forth over all the earth, and their words have reached the extremity of the globe.

This rapid and extensive propagation of the Gospel, by a few obscure men, without learning, without credit, or any human support, can be no other than the miraculous work of God's own hand. To that divine power alone, which searches and directs the motions of man's heart, must be ascribed this wonderful triumph of religion. Allured by no earthly advantages, and subdued by no other force than that of truth, the learned and ignorant, the Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and Barbarians, meekly bend their necks to the yoke of Christ, shake off their ancient prejudices, and profess themselves the followers of a crucified God.



SECTION III.

Virtues of the Primitive Christians.

(A. D. 36.) IN the practice of religion, nothing can appear more charming than the picture drawn by St. Luke, of the infant Church, in his Acts of the Apostles. He assures us, that of the vast numbers, who believed in Jesus Christ, there was but one heart and one soul. All being animated with the same spirit, they were united in the same bonds of perfect charity. No one appropriated the same thing to himself, exclusive of his neighbor: for all things were common amongst them. They, who sold their lands or houses, brought their money to the Apostles for the public use, that each one might be relieved according to their wants. Each one's wants were no sooner known,

than charitably removed. The consolation of the Holy Ghost dwelt amongst them; their placid looks indicated the spiritual sweetness that replenished their souls. Their fervent piety embraced every kind of public virtue in an eminent degree. Their hospitality, their attention to the social duties of fraternal charity, their daily presence in the Temple at the stated hours, their devout behavior during the solemn service of religion, drew respect from all who beheld them.

Such is the character St. Luke has given us of the first Christians of Jerusalem. The virtues of the converted Gentiles were no less solid, as we gather from the epistles of St. Paul, though perhaps not so sublime upon the whole. Before the Apostle came amongst them, the Gentiles had imbibed no principle of true religion, and had seen no exercise of that pure worship, by which the sovereign Lord of all things is duly honored in spirit and in truth. Bewildered in the labyrinth of infidelity, and debauched by the licentious absurdities of idolatry, they were not only destitute of real virtue, but deeply tainted with almost every vice incident to corrupt nature. But no sooner were they instructed in the principles of Christianity, and cleansed from sin in the waters of baptism, than they became the faithful imitators of their evangelical teachers. A total change of principle and manners made them objects of admiration to the former companions of their irregularities. The lewd became chaste and temperate, the boisterous meek and patient, the ambitious sought no other glory than that of subduing their own rebellious passions. Prayer was the occupation of their leisure hours, and a sincere desire of doing the will of God in all things, sanctified their most ordinary actions of the day. Tertullian* speaks of the

* *De Corona militis.*

pious custom they had of making the sign of the cross on every occasion, as a mark of their lively faith and confidence in the merits of their crucified Redeemer. Hence, in the midst of temporal concerns they never lost sight of eternal goods; while their hands were at work, their hearts aspired to Heaven. The prospect of an everlasting reward, which they knew God had prepared for them in his kingdom of glory, quickened their diligence in the discharge of every civil and religious duty. Which of the two are we to admire most, the bounteous liberality of God in thus communicating his graces to those fervent Christians, or the fidelity of those Christians in thus co-operating with the divine gifts? To our humble admiration of the first let us join our imitation of the second, we then shall pay due honor to them both.

SECTION IV.

Council of Jerusalem.

(A. D. 51.) NOTWITHSTANDING the bright virtues, which adorn the general conduct of the primitive Christians, certain blemishes at times appeared in the deportment of individuals. Whether from jealousy, or misguided zeal, many of the Jewish converts proposed it as a matter of obligation, that the Gentiles, who became Christians, ought to submit to the law of circumcision, if they hoped to be saved. The proposition was first started at Antioch by some proselytes, who came thither from Judea. Warm disputes in consequence arose; divisions ensued, religion as well as charity were likely to suffer. St. Paul and Barna-

bas were luckily there. They remonstrated with their countrymen on the unreasonableness of their pretensions, and represented to them, that the necessity of circumcision was incompatible with the grace of Jesus Christ. They argued in vain: words made no impression upon men wedded to their own opinion by prejudice and the force of education. They agreed, however, to refer the matter to the Apostles, who were in Jerusalem. St. Peter happened to be there at the time on a visit from Rome.

St. Paul and Barnabas then repaired by common consent to Jerusalem, to have the question formally decided. They were received in a very friendly manner: they informed St. Peter and the other Apostles of the business they came upon. The Apostles, therefore, and the priests met in council to debate the subject in dispute. Having conferred together for some time upon the nature of the question, St. Peter arose and related what things God had wrought by his ministry among the Gentiles, and from evident marks of the divine approbation in their regard, concluded that no superfluous burden of the ancient law ought to be imposed upon them. Paul and Barnabas then recounted what wonders God had also done by their hands, in favor of the Gentiles. The assembly listened in profound silence and attention. St. James concluded the debate by expressing his approbation of the decision given by St. Peter, that such of the Gentiles, as in future should embrace the Christian faith, were not to be molested about any ceremonial practices of the law, which did not regard them.

The whole council being of the same opinion, they formed a decree to the following effect:—"It hath seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, not to lay any further burden on you, our brethren of the Gentiles in Antioch, in Syria, and Cilicia, than that you abstain from things offered

to idols, from blood, from strangled meats, and fornication." The council judged it necessary to caution them against the sin of fornication, the guilt of which was not well understood among the Gentiles. To abstain from blood and strangled meats was a temporary injunction, enacted with a view of gaining the good will of the Jews, and of weaning them by degrees from their religious prejudices in favor of the ancient observances of the Mosaic law.

In this first Council of Jerusalem, the Apostles established a judicial form of acting, which the Church has followed ever since in deciding all questions, that relate to faith and discipline. A dispute, important in its consequence, had arisen amongst the faithful; private authority, even that of St. Paul, had not sufficient weight to silence the contending parties: deputies were named to consult the church of Jerusalem, where the gospel was first planted, and where Peter, the head of the Apostles, was then present. The Apostles and Ancients of the Church assembled; St. Peter presided; he stated the subject of dispute, and was the first who spoke and delivered his opinion upon it. Each one, who chose to speak, had his turn in due order. The question being regularly argued and discussed, all unanimously agreed in one opinion, and formed a dogmatical decree upon the subject. Two deputies, Judas and Silas, were commissioned to carry the decree, accompanied with a letter, in the name of the Council, to Antioch. The faithful received it with equal joy and respect. The subject of disagreement was removed, and we hear no more of their disputes.

In all subsequent ages of Christianity, as well as in the first, the Faithful have ever respectfully received the dogmatical decisions of the Church, as most certain truths, dictated by the unerring Spirit of God. Their submission

and respect for what the Church teaches, is the pious result of that firm persuasion, which every Catholic has, that the Church is infallible in her doctrine, and being always guided by the Spirit of truth, can teach nothing false. The divine author of our religion, having engaged his word for this effect, they are sure of not being deceived. "I will ask my Father," says he,* "and he will give you another Comforter, that he may remain with you for ever, the Spirit of truth. But when the Holy Spirit of truth, the Comforter, shall come, and the Father will send him in my name, he will teach you all truth."† "To me all power is given in heaven and earth. Go ye, therefore, teach all nations. Behold, I am with you at all times, even to the end of the world."‡ This promise is the promise of Jesus Christ the God of truth: it is clear, it is absolute, it extends through all ages to the end of time. Omnipotent is the God who has made this solemn promise. Will any Christian dare to say, that Christ meant nothing by his promise, or that he has not the power or the will to execute what he promised? Dare he give so blasphemous a lie to the eternal Word? Shame on those, who with bold impiety assert, that Jesus Christ has let his beloved Spouse bow to the idols of a false worship, and contrary to his promise, has suffered the gates of hell to prevail against her. §

* John, c. xiv. v. 16, 17.

VOL. I.

† C. xvi.

‡ Matt. xxviii.

4

§ Matt. c. xvi. v. 18.

SECTION V.

Martyrdom of St. James the Less.

(A. D. 62.) THE incredulous Jews beheld the progress of Christianity with an evil eye. Their animosity had been much inflamed by St. Paul's appeal to the tribunal of Cæsar. Festus, the Roman Governor, had hitherto prevented them from carrying their designs to the last degree of violence against the Apostle. But Festus was then dead, and his successor not arrived. That circumstance gave them a favorable opportunity of renewing their hostilities against the Church. Ananus, the High Priest, called the Sanhedrim together: James, the bishop of Jerusalem, was desired to attend. This was James the Less, so called to distinguish him from the other James, whom Herod Agrippa, in compliment to the Jews, had put to death about twenty years before. The surname of Just had been also given him, on account of his exemplary piety and extensive charity.

St. James having taken his seat among the elders, Ananus thus addressed him:—"An opinion prevails among the people, that Jesus, the crucified, is the Messiah, long foretold by our ancient Prophets. They are undoubtedly in an error. The respect they bear you gives you great sway over them. It behoves you to set them right. A public declaration of your belief must have its due effect." To bereave the Apostle either of his faith or of his life was the wicked design, which the high-priest here had in view. He flattered himself, that human respects, or the fear of suffering might induce the Apostle to deny or to dissemble the truth, by either of which he would have gained his ends. But should the Apostle publicly proclaim Jesus to be the

true Messiah, he was sure of a plausible pretext to take away his life. That the declaration might be as public as determined malice could devise, he commanded the Apostle to ascend the battlements of the Temple, and from thence declare his sentiments to the surrounding multitude.

The venerable Confessor no sooner appeared than a stationed groupe of Scribes and Pharisees loudly called upon him to declare what he thought of Jesus. The Saint then, collecting all his strength, in an audible and distinct voice replied, "Jesus, the son of man, is now sitting at the right hand of the Father, as the son of God, and will hereafter come upon the clouds to judge the living and the dead." A declaration so expressive of the divinity of Jesus Christ, animated the courage of the Christians, who were present, into an open profession of the same truth. In a joyful shout they all exclaimed, "Glory to the son of David, honor and glory be to Jesus." The enraged Pharisees, on the other hand, cried out, "The Just has erred; let him be instantly flung down, and stoned upon the spot." It was no sooner said than done. The holy Apostle was flung headlong down from the battlements, and received at the bottom with a discharge of stones from the hands of a furious populace. That did not kill him. Life was still in him, and he had strength sufficient to put himself upon his knees. In that humble posture he prayed aloud for his wicked murderers, after the example of his divine Master, and besought God to forgive them, because they knew not what they did. While he thus prayed, a savage fuller stepped forward with a mallet in his hand; a single stroke upon his head put an end to the Saint's life and suffering. His body was honorably interred in the spot where he suffered, and a column erected over it. This was a public tribute of respect, which the repute of his exalted sanctity justly merited. To the crime

of having murdered so just a man, Josephus attributes the ruin that befel his country, ten years after, from the Roman arms. The remark of the Jewish historian may testify the general esteem in which St. James was held by his countrymen, but we know from higher authority, that the subversion of Jerusalem was in punishment of crimes still more enormous, of which the Jewish nation stood guilty in the sight of the insulted Deity. They had slain the Prophets, they had stoned to death those whom God had sent for their reformation, and to fill the measure of their guilt, they had at last crucified Jesus the Messiah.

St. James has left us an epistle, which he wrote to the twelve tribes of dispersed Jews, in order to convince them, that faith without good works is not sufficient for salvation, as some erroneously maintained. Martin Luther, the reforming doctor of Wirtemberg, in Saxony, relished these ancient errors, and renewed them in the beginning of the sixteenth century, affirming the doctrine of St. James' canonical epistle to be no better than straw, and unworthy of an Apostle.



105

SECTION VI.

First Persecution under Nero.

(A. D. 64.) ALTHOUGH the faithful had variously suffered in many places, both from Jews and Gentiles, they had not yet undergone any general persecution; Nero was the first, who armed the sovereign power of Rome against them. That cruel prince observing the rapid progress of Christianity, which had penetrated even within the walls of his

own palace, published an edict, which made it a capital offence to profess the Christian religion. Nero had had the advantage of a moral education, under Seneca, the Philosopher. For the first five years after his elevation to the throne, he continued to listen to his master's precepts, and thereby gained the reputation of a just and clement sovereign. Happy for him, as well as for his subjects, had it been, if he had remained in the same temperate disposition. But wicked courtiers flattered and seduced him into a mere monster of cruelty and lust the most shameful. He then began to consider the advice of Seneca as an insufferable censure of his conduct; under a false pretext he procured his death. He poisoned Germanicus, his father-in-law; put to death his mother, and wife Petavia, and with a kick killed his second wife, Poppea, big with child. He often wished the whole human race had but one head, that he might have the pleasure of cutting it off with one stroke. He set Rome on fire, that he might enjoy the vain satisfaction of re-building it on a more magnificent and more extensive plan, and of giving it his own name. These wild extravaganzas caused no small ferment among the citizens of Rome. He dreaded their resentment, and artfully sought to turn it against some other object. The Christians, he knew, were held in equal contempt and dislike by the Pagans. He openly accused them of being the authors of the late conflagration. The calumny, though destitute of proof, and even of the very shadow of truth, obtained credit amongst the ignorant and deluded multitude. A similar slander, and with similar success, at the distance of sixteen hundred years, has been scandalously forged, and blindly credited, against the Catholics of London, when a considerable part of the city was burnt down by accidental fire, in 1666.

Nero availed himself of the blind credulity of the mob, and under the pretext of punishing a race of supposed incendiaries, commenced a persecution against the innocent professors of christianity. Not content with the usual instruments of death, he invented new tortures, and new modes of killing, to torment and terrify: some were wrapped up in skins of wild beasts, and worried by dogs; others were braced round with tunics steeped in pitch, placed at certain distances, and set on fire to illuminate the streets by night instead of lamps. These scenes of horror were continued for a length of time, to gratify the whims of a savage tyrant, who sported in human blood. The persecution extended to the provinces, and lasted as long as Nero lived. Vast numbers of Christians during that time, as Pagans themselves allow, were barbarously butchered, not for any crime they stood guilty of, but in hatred of the religion they professed.* The account given by Mr. Gibbon of this historical fact, betrays more of the Infidel than of the Christian. With this author the bare word of a Pagan, a Tacitus or a Suetonius, even on a religious point, outweighs the most authentic testimony of every christian writer.

Among the many who suffered during Nero's persecution, were St. Peter and St. Paul. These holy Apostles are said to have been confined in a loathsome prison, at the foot of the Capitol. There they passed the last nine months of their mortal pilgrimage, when they were led out to martyrdom. St. Peter was crucified with his head downwards; St. Paul, being a Roman citizen, had the honor of dying by the sword. Nero closed the horrors of his bloody reign by putting an end to his own existence, in the year sixty-eight.

* Pliny, L. 10, Ep. 102.

SECTION VII.

Destruction of Jerusalem.

(A. D. 72.) ON the fall of Nero, Galba, who commanded in Spain, mounted the imperial throne. From him the sceptre passed in quick succession into the hands of Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian. Vespasian was an experienced general, and had been employed with success by Nero, against the insurgents of Judea. The Jews still considered themselves as the chosen people of God, notwithstanding their rejection and murder of his eternal Son, their promised Messiah. To be stript of their independence, and enslaved by the heathen emperors of Rome, was deemed by them not only a disgrace, but an oppression not to be borne. They made several unsuccessful attempts to shake off the galling yoke; they at last openly revolted. The period fixed for the punishment of their crimes was at hand; their revolt was the beginning of their extirpation. The Christians of Jerusalem saw the gathering storm, which from the prediction of Jesus Christ they knew must burst in the destruction of their city. By a timely flight, they hastened, as forewarned, into the town of Pella, amidst the mountains of Syria.

The Roman legions under the command of Titus, the emperor's son, had now traversed the plains of Palestine, and were in full march to besiege Jerusalem. The unhappy citizens, unmindful of their situation, which called for the greatest unanimity in repelling the common enemy, were divided into two factions, tearing each other to pieces with the most savage animosity. No stores of provisions had been laid in for the craving multitudes, who had flung themselves within the walls. The city was so closely hemmed

in by the besiegers, that no communication could be had with the adjacent country, and no necessaries of life be procured; the dreadful effects of famine soon appeared. The famished crowd strove who could be the first to seize whatever looked like food; houses, in search of it, were broke open; many were compelled by tortures to produce the scanty remnants they had concealed for their own subsistence; the infirm and weak had no resource; by a stronger hand the tempting morsel was ravenously snatched from their mouth, already gaping to devour it. Yet, in the midst of all this misery no one thought of submitting to the victor's clemency, or of doing penance for the crimes which had drawn this vengeance on them.

Titus all the while pushed on the siege with great vigor. He was master of the fort Antonia, his advanced works reached the temple, of which the two outward galleries were in his possession. The wretched citizens then began to suffer from famine in a more deplorable degree. They greedily devoured the most disgusting things to human nature, they eat their own children, and even ransacked the common sewers in quest of food. A woman, reduced by hunger to the last extremity, took her sucking infant from her breast, then fixing her eyes upon him with a look of wild despair, thus expressed the anguish of her heart: Hapless babe, shall I take away thy life to prolong my own? Or, by giving thee my milk, to what wretched misery shall I reserve thee? Wilt thou not be doomed to die at last with hunger, or to live a Roman slave? In saying this she thrust a knife into the throat of her little infant, and divided his body into two equal parts, one of which she roasted and eat, reserving the other half for her meal the next day. Some of the garrison happened to be passing, and perceiving the smell of something roasted, entered the house, and

with horrid threats, insisted upon the woman's producing the fragments of her repast. She produced the fragments of her half-devoured child. Seeing them turn pale with horror at the sight, she said: You are not surely more nice in eating than a woman; nor can your feelings be more tender than those of a mother: You see the remains of my dear ill-fated infant; I have eaten one half, you well may eat the other. They made no answer, but turning upon their heels walked away in sad and thoughtful silence.

Titus had now made his approaches as far as the second or inner enclosure of the Temple. He set fire to the gates, but gave a strict order, that no damage should be done to the body of the sacred edifice. God in his justice otherwise ordained. A Roman soldier, being actuated by a kind of supernatural impulse, says Josephus, seized a lighted torch, and raising himself up by the help of his comrades, threw it into an apartment joining the Temple. The flame immediately mounted into a spreading blaze, and in spite of every effort made to stop its progress, soon reduced the whole fabric to a heap of stones. The Roman troops then furiously rushed into the city, and, without distinction of age or sex, put to the sword all who came in their way. Within the space of four months that the siege lasted, not less than eleven hundred thousand Jews perished by famine and the sword; the survivors were publicly sold for slaves, and dispersed through the Roman empire. With the ruin of the Temple and the dispersion of the Jewish people ceased the Jewish sacrifices, as had been foretold by Daniel,* and confirmed by our blessed Saviour.† According to his divine prediction all the buildings of that devoted city were demolished in so complete a manner as not to leave one stone upon another. Jerusalem, the capital of the ancient kings

* C. 9.

† Matt. c. xxiv, v. 15.

of Juda, Jerusalem, the seat of religion, the former nursery of saints and heroes, and by pre-eminence called the holy city, thus fell in punishment of her crimes. The Romans were instrumental in the avenging hand of God to do justice to his injured mercy.

SECTION VIII.

Second Persecution under Domitian.

(A. D. 93.) **TITUS**, at his return to Rome, had the honor of a joint triumph with his father, **Vespasian**. **Vespasian** was naturally of a humane, pacific disposition, and the only good prince, that had swayed the imperial sceptre since **Augustus**. A tinge of avarice, however, has been thought a stain in his princely character. **Titus** his son, and a still better man, succeeded him in the throne. Benevolence was the characteristic mark, that distinguished **Titus** among the sovereigns of Rome. He delighted in doing good, and would often tell his friends, that to him it was a lost day, in which he had done no act of humanity. His reign was short. Poison, it is thought, carried him out of life to make room for **Domitian**, his tyrannic brother, and the last of the twelve Cæsars.

Domitian possessed all the vices of **Nero**, even his hatred of Christianity. Like him he published a sanguinary edict against the professors of that religion, and began a general persecution, which was carried on with such violence, that it seemed to threaten utter destruction to the whole Church. The faithful had been forewarned of the rising storm, and

by their redoubled fervor in all religious duties, had prepared themselves for the trying conflict. Amongst the many, who suffered martyrdom on this occasion, the most distinguished for his rank in life was Flavius Clemens, the consul and cousin-german to Domitian. Memorable also are the sufferings of St. John, the Evangelist, in this persecution. His divine master had assured him,* that he should drink of his bitter cup in due season; the time was now come. He had the merit of sacrificing his life for Christ, like the rest of the Apostles, although he died not with them in the combat. St. John had hitherto preached the Gospel without molestation in Asia Minor, where he founded several particular churches, which he continued to govern by his apostolical authority. He resided chiefly at Ephesus in Ionia. From thence, upon an information being lodged against him, he was cited by the emperor to Rome, and on account of his faith condemned to be cast alive into a caldron of boiling oil. The sentence was carried into execution before the Latin gate. The miraculous power of God interposed in his behalf. The glorious martyr came out of the boiling caldron not only unhurt, but more fresh and vigorous than he went in, as Tertullian testifies. The Heathens, better acquainted with the works of darkness than of light, attributed his preservation to magic art, and procured his banishment to the island of Patmos, in the Archipelago. Here, remote from noise and all wordly intercourse, the Saint was favored with those heavenly visions, which he has so emphatically described in his book of Revelations. On the death of Domitian, in the year ninety-six, St. John returned to Ephesus, where he had other enemies to encounter, and other troubles to endure.

* Matt. c. xx.

At that early period of Christianity the Church had the mortification to see many of her children fall from their first faith, and teach false doctrines. Men, vain of their own conceits, set themselves up for new teachers in opposition to the apostolic truths, and openly began to sow the seeds of heresy and discord among the faithful. They were Jewish converts, who, proving unfaithful to their vocation, went out of the pale of the Catholic Church, and were no longer members of it, as St. John testifies.* Of these false brethren the chief were Ebion, Cerinthus, and Nicholas of Antioch. Amongst other errors, they denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, and asserted the necessity of observing all the ceremonies of the Mosaic law. To silence these heretical declaimers, St. John, at the request of the bishops of Asia, wrote his Gospel. In this undertaking he had two objects in view ; the one was to prove the eternal existence of his divine Master, the other was to pen down a more circumstantial account of some facts in the life of Jesus Christ, which he observed to have been either wholly omitted by the other evangelists, or but slightly touched. About the same time he seems to have written his Epistles, which breathe the most pure and the most ardent charity. They are the language of a heart inflamed with that divine fire, which he drew from his blessed Lord, when leaning on his breast at the last supper. When reduced by age to extreme weakness, and unable to walk, he would be carried to church, that he might assist at the divine service : having no longer either voice or strength to make any long discourse to the assembled brethren, he constantly repeated this short but pathetic sentence, "My dear children, love one another," till they were tired of hearing it, and they told him so. His reply was, "It is the precept of the

* 1 Epist. c. ii.

Lord, and if it be only done, it is sufficient." He died a natural death at Ephesus, about the close of the first century.



SECTION IX.

Disunion of the Christians at Corinth.

(A. D. 96.) THE heathen tyrants vainly fancied, that by cutting off the head and principal members of the Church, they should compass the destruction of the whole body. But the promises of God are not to be defeated by any malice or by any power of men. St. Peter was no sooner slain, than St. Linus was chosen to supply his place. To Linus succeeded Cletus, and after him St. Clement, of whom St. Paul makes mention in his Epistle to the Philippians. In this pontiff's reign great disturbances arose among the Christians of Corinth. The spirit of cabal had infused itself into the minds of the laity; they conspired against their pastors, and carried their violence so far as to drive some of them from the exercise of their ministerial functions. On that occasion St. Clement wrote an Epistle to them equally pathetic and instructive. Next to the Holy Scripture it is one of the most precious monuments we have of ecclesiastical antiquity. It begins in the following manner:

"The Church of God, which is at Rome, to that of Corinth, to those who have been called and sanctified by the will of God in our Lord Jesus Christ. May the grace and peace of God the Almighty be increased by Christ Jesus in every one of you." Then, after having exposed the wretched state of anarchy and confusion into which their

unhappy jealousies had cast their little flock, the zealous writer sweetly reminds them of the happy days when they trod the path of virtue in simplicity and peace. "At that time," says the holy pontiff, "your virtues, your piety, your zeal, your inviolable attachment to the law of God were the admiration of all who knew you. You were then submissive to your pastors, you respected your superiors, you set the example of sobriety and modesty to your children, you established and maintained good order within your families. More ready to obey than to command, more eager to give than to receive, you cherished the sentiments of moderation and humility in your hearts. Content with the common gifts of Providence for your support in life, you turned your thoughts on God, and studied the observance of his holy law. Thus you enjoyed the sweetest tranquility and peace of mind. Being animated with the purest charity, you felt a warm desire, and caught every opportunity of doing good. Full of confidence and zeal, you never ceased lifting up your hands to the throne of mercy, humbly craving forgiveness for the sins of frail mortality. Day and night you poured forth your prayers for the salvation and happiness of your brethren in Christ, that the number of the elect might be speedily completed. You then were void of malice, your conduct was sincere and blameless. You held in abhorrence the very name of contention and discord, you pitied your deluded neighbor, and bewailed his faulty oversights as your own. But how sadly is the prospect since changed? How clouded now and how dismal is the view, which was once so bright and delightful? In lieu of content and harmony, jealousy and disunion prevail amongst you."

The holy Father then produces several examples from the inspired writings to prove the fatal effects of jealousy,

and in most moving terms exhorts them to repentance, to the practice of humility and fraternal charity. These duties he strongly impresses on them from the examples of saints, from the consideration of God's goodness towards them, from the sacred ties of religion, that unite and bind the faithful followers of Jesus Christ into one body. "Why are there quarrels," continues the Saint, "why are there divisions among you? Have we not all the same God, the same Redeemer, the same Saviour, the same Spirit, who has sanctified us by our vocation into one faith in Jesus Christ? Why then do we divide his members, why do we tear our own body into pieces? For surely we never can forget, that we are all members of one another. Your divisions have perverted many; they have disheartened others; they have overwhelmed all with deep affliction. Rouse then, my brethren, quickly remove the scandal and stop the growing evil. Let us prostrate ourselves at the feet of our Lord God, let us with tears implore forgiveness. He is all mercy; his goodness is ready to forgive our offence, to forget our weakness, and to re-instate us in the habit of brotherly affection." So it proved. Peace again united the Church of Corinth.

CENTURY II.

SECTION I.

Third Persecution under Trajan.

(A. D. 101.) ON the death of Domitian, Nerva, a native of Crete, was chosen to govern the Roman empire. Under his mild but short reign, the Church suffered no persecution. He recalled the Christian exiles, and took measures for restoring the empire to its first lustre. But finding himself too far advanced in life for the accomplishment of that design, he adopted Trajan for his coadjutor and successor. Trajan had acquired military fame in the armies of Vespasian and Titus against the Jews. In history he is celebrated for clemency and wisdom. His political conduct on many occasions may have displayed those qualifications in a manner that gained him credit with a flattering world. But intemperance stained his wisdom, and cruelty towards his Christian subjects was a blot upon his clemency. He published an ordinance against all nocturnal assemblies. The Christians, not tolerated by law, could have no other time but night for the quiet celebration of the sacred mysteries. This imperial order gave a handle to the provincial governors for renewing the horrors of persecution. Trajan at first rather countenanced than promoted deeds of cruelty, but after some time he caused the sanguinary edicts of his predecessors, Nero and Domitian, to be put in execution. The persecution then became general, and the provinces flowed with Christian blood.

The younger Pliny, in his letters, gives us very interesting intelligence upon this subject. Pliny at that time was

governor of Bithynia, and by letter had consulted Trajan, in what manner he was to act with respect to the Christians, in whom he declares no crime could be found. "Their only error," says he, "is this, that on a certain day they meet before sun-rise, and in two quires sing hymns to Christ, whom they acknowledge and honor as their God. In their form of worship I discover no harm, except an ill-grounded superstition, carried to excess. In every other respect I find them wholly blameless: they are just and honest by principle, faithful to their promise, and worthy of the trust reposed in them. Theft and adultery are proscribed from their society even by vow. Great are their numbers of both sexes, of every age and of every rank in life. The fields, the towns and villages swarm with them. At my arrival in the province, I could hardly find a man to purchase victims for our altars; the temples of our Gods were deserted, and their feasts interrupted. The matter seems important and deserving of your attention. Hitherto I have suspended all proceedings against them: I wait your orders to direct me." How honorable to Christian morality is the testimony of a Pagan writer, how glorious to religion! It distinctly shows the surprising progress of Christianity in that province, and the shining virtues of its proselytes.

Trajan's answer does no great credit either to his celebrated wisdom or his clemency. His directions are, that no search after Christians was to be made; but if any of them were accused and convicted of being such, that they must suffer death. In consequence of this incoherent declaration, so injurious to acknowledged innocence, and so inconsistent with common justice, many Christians were maliciously accused, and cruelly put to death solely for their faith. Among these illustrious champions are St. Clement,

bishop of Rome, St. Ignatius of Antioch, and St. Simeon of Jerusalem. Simeon in blood was nearly related to our blessed Saviour, and had attained the hundred and twentieth year of his age. But neither his grey hairs nor his sanctity could screen him from the malice of persecution. Being denounced for a Christian as well as for a descendant of David, he was condemned to a variety of torments, all which he underwent with a fortitude truly wonderful. The spectators stood astonished to see such vigor and such strength of mind displayed in so advanced an age. He was at last crucified, the faithful follower of Jesus Christ both in life and death.

SECTION II.

St. Ignatius before Trajan.

(A. D. 107.) ST. CLEMENT, the holy bishop of Rome, was one of the first who suffered death under Trajan. Anacletus, a Greek by birth, and a disciple of St. Peter, succeeded him in the pontificate; but he, being also slain by the persecutor's sword, after a reign of ten years, had for his successor in St. Peter's chair, Evaristus, a Greek, who, like his predecessors, finished a holy life by martyrdom.

Trajan, being engaged in a war with the Parthians, marched in person against them, and took Antioch in his way. At his arrival in that city, his first concern was to inquire after the worship of his false gods. Finding it to have fallen into disrepute, he ordered Ignatius, the bishop, surnamed Theophorus, to be brought before him. As soon as the Saint appeared, the emperor, in a stern and angry

tone, thus accosted him : Is it thou, wicked demon, is it thou, that darest to transgress my commands, and presumest to persuade others to do the like ? Ignatius answered, no man calls Theophorus a wicked demon. Who is Theophorus ? said Trajan. It is he who carries God in his breast, replied the Saint, alluding to the import of the word. And do not we seem to thee, continued the emperor, to bear the gods in our breast, when they so visibly assist and protect us against our enemies ? The gods, replied Ignatius, you mistake, Prince, in calling them gods : they are truly demons. There is one only God, who made heaven and earth, and all things in them, and one Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord. Dost thou mean him, whom Pontius Pilate ordered to be crucified ? said Trajan. Yes, answered Ignatius, the very same, who by his death has vanquished the infernal powers, and enables those who bear him in their breasts, to trample those wicked spirits under foot. Trajan said, dost thou then carry Christ within thee ? Yes, replied Ignatius ; for it is written, "I will dwell within them." * Silenced and provoked by these replies, Trajan dictated the following sentence :

"It is our will, that Ignatius, who saith he carries the crucified Man within him, be bound and conducted to Rome, to be there devoured by wild beasts for the amusement of the people." The undaunted martyr, at hearing the sentence, exclaimed, with a holy joy : I bless thee, O Lord, for honouring me with this token of thy love, and for letting me be bound with these iron chains for thy sake, in imitation of thy Apostle Paul. Then praying for his flock, and recommending it with tears to God, he readily put on the chains, and by a band of soldiers was instantly hurried off to begin his journey towards Rome.

* 2 Cor. x. vi.

Ignatius travelled by land as far as Seleucia, where he was put on board a ship. They steered their course along the south-west coast of Asia Minor, till they reached Smyrna, where they permitted him to go ashore. This was a singular comfort to Ignatius, as it afforded him the opportunity of seeing and conversing with the bishop of Polycarp, formerly his fellow disciple under St. John the Evangelist. Polycarp, far from lamenting at seeing his friend in that situation, congratulated with him on his chains and sufferings in so glorious a cause. Deputies from the neighbouring churches were there, ready to salute him in his passage, and to beg a share of those spiritual gifts, with which he abounded. The humble martyr on his part expressed the interior joy he felt at the thought of dying for Jesus Christ, and earnestly intreated them to unite in prayer with him for the grace of final perseverance. He likewise requested his prayers for his widowed church in Syria, that in his absence God would please to take it under his special protection. Such was the zeal, and such was the ardour of charity, that warmed the heart of this holy man!

SECTION III.

Epistles of St. Ignatius.

(A. D. 107.) FROM Smyrna, St. Ignatius wrote four epistles to the Christians of four different churches, the Ephesians, the Magnesians, the Thrallians, and Romans. He commends the Ephesians for their unanimity, for their zeal and piety in the divine service: he exhorts them to promote the honour of God by every means in their power, to pay a

respectful submission to their bishop and priests of the church, to oppose meekness to anger, humility to vain glory, prayer to reproaches, and to bear all the injuries without murmuring. In a word, he tells them to be chiefly sollicitous, how to edify others by their virtuous lives, rather than amuse them with fine discourses. In a pathetic and ingenious turn of expression he repeats nearly the same instructions to the Magnesians and Thrallians, warns them against heresy and schism by declaring his own utter abhorrence of both, and concludes by requesting their prayers for himself and for his church in Syria, of which he deems himself unworthy to be called a member.

In his epistle to the Romans, his expostulations with them are no less fervent than singular. They are the language of a Saint wholly absorbed in God, ardently desiring to be dissolved and to be with Christ. The kind of death reserved for him at Rome, was constantly in his thoughts. Knowing how efficacious the prayers of the faithful in that city had been, in closing the mouths of roaring lions upon some, who had been exposed to their ravenous fury, earnestly requests them not to pray for his delivery. "I fear your charity," says he; "your powerful intercession with the Almighty might perhaps delay my death, but in delaying my death, you would delay my happiness. Your affection for me, I apprehend, springs from too humane a motive. If your charity be sincere, you will let me go to enjoy my God. Never shall I have again so fair an opportunity of giving my life to be united to God, nor you of doing so good a work by your silence. Be but silent in my behalf, and I shall soon be happy in the enjoyment of my God. A greater kindness you cannot do me than in letting me consummate the sacrifice, now that the altar is prepared. Let me quickly pass out of this lower world unto God, that by

dying for him I may rise in glory. But if affection for me prompts you still to pray, pray, I beseech you, that in this frail body! I may prove an acceptable sacrifice to God: pray, that God in his mercy may grant me the inward and outward strength becoming a Christian. A Christian's worth lies not in words, or in plausible appearances. A magnanimity of soul and solid virtue solely form the true Christian. The possession of all the kingdoms upon earth could not make me happy: infinitely more glorious is it to die for Jesus Christ, than to reign over the whole world. My soul breathes after him, who died on the cross for me; my heart pants after him, who rose from the dead. Behold the object of my hope. All earthly objects are indifferent to me: the hope of possessing God my Saviour solely draws and engages my whole attention. Let flames reduce my body to ashes; let me expire by slow degrees upon a cross; let lions and tigers grind my bones, and tear me limb from limb, I shall suffer all with joy, trusting in the grace of my Redeemer Christ, who stands ready to reward our short sufferings with a crown of everlasting glory. Let me then tread the footsteps of my suffering Jesus; let not your prayers delay my entrance into life by delaying my death." Thus did that blessed martyr glory in his sufferings for Christ, as in the highest honours. His soul sublimely rose beyond all earthly views: his holy ambition was to possess and to enjoy God in his kingdom of glory, which shall never end.

The guards, assigned him by the emperor, would not allow him time to write any thing more from Smyrna, being eager to reach Rome before the public shows were over. They set sail, and stopped again at Troas. From thence Ignatius wrote three other epistles, one to the Christians of Philadelphia, another to those of Smyrna, whom he had

lately quitted, and a third to St. Polycarp, whom he commissioned to write in his name to the other churches of Asia. In his epistle to the Smyrneans he refutes the error of the impious Docetæ, who denied Christ to have assumed real flesh, and for this reason abstained from the Eucharist, says he, "Because they do not confess the Eucharist to be the flesh of our Saviour Jesus Christ, which was crucified and rose again. The primitive doctrine of Christ's real presence is here so expressly delivered by Ignatius, the disciple of St. John the Apostle and Evangelist, that the disciples of John Calvin had no other means of getting rid of a testimony so respectable and so opposite to their new positions of modern doctrine, than by asserting that the epistle in question was never penned by Ignatius. Daille, a Calvinistical minister of Charenton, wrote to justify the rash and impudent assertion. Doctor Pearson, the learned Protestant bishop of Chester, has in a masterly manner refuted the weak arguments of the puny champion of Geneva. In fact, the various quotations from all the seven epistles, as cited by St. Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, St. Athanasius, St. Jerom, St. Chrysostom, Theodoret, and other ancient authors of unquestionable veracity, leave no room to doubt of their authenticity. Other letters he is said to have written to the Virgin Mary, and to St. John, but upon examination they are generally thought, by discerning critics, not to have been the production of the pen of Ignatius.

SECTION IV.

Martyrdom of St. Ignatius.

(A. D. 107.) FROM Troas Ignatius was conveyed by sea to Neapolis in Macedonia. From thence he went to Philippi, and having traversed Macedonia and Epirus on foot, took shipping again at Epidamnium in Dalmatia, and passing by the Rhegium and Puteoli, landed at the mouth of the Tiber, sixteen miles from Rome. The expectation of his arrival had drawn numbers of the faithful thither, who were eager to see and converse with so renowned a Saint. The soldiers hurried him on to Rome. The faithful came out in crowds to meet him. Many expressed a wish that he might be released at the request of the people. The venerable martyr then addressed them upon the subject, and with such force of expression besought them not to frustrate the desire he had of being speedily admitted to the presence of his God, that they silently submitted. They respectfully fell upon their knees before him; he knelt down with them, and in an audible voice made a fervent prayer to Jesus Christ, that he would vouchsafe to quell the storm of persecution, that he would restore the Church to peace, and unite the faithful in the closest bonds of union and brotherly affection. It was the twentieth of December, the last day of the public entertainments. He was immediately conducted to the prefect of the city, who in compliance with the emperor's order, sent him under a guard to the amphitheatre.

The whole city of Rome seemed to be there assembled; the lions roared with savage expectation of their prey. In the middle of the circus, encircled with innumerable spectators, longing for the barbarous sight, stood the undaunted

champion, with a serene and joyful countenance, waiting for the consummation of his martyrdom. Hearing the lions roar, he cried out: "I am the wheat of Christ, I must be ground by the teeth of those animals to be made the pure bread of Christ." Two hungry lions were instantly let out upon him; they fiercely seized him in their teeth, crushed and devoured his whole body, except the larger bones. These bones were devoutly gathered up by the faithful, laid in a chest, as an inestimable treasure, and carried to Antioch, where they were first deposited in the cemetery outside the Daphnetic gate, and afterwards, in the reign of Theodosius, the younger, were translated with great pomp to a church, bearing his name, within the city, as Evagrius relates. In those days of primitive piety and religion, it was deemed no superstitious act to pay such honor to the relics of a Saint, who had died for the faith of Christ. St. Chrysostom, in his panegyric on this glorious martyr, exhorts the faithful to visit his precious relics, assuring them, that they would reap thereby many advantages both spiritual and temporal.



SECTION V.

Apology of St. Justin.

(A. D. 150.) For eighteen years had the spirit of persecution been kept up with unrelenting fury, when Trajan, glutted as it were with the cruel habit of spilling guiltless blood, issued an order that no more Christians should be put to death. The respite was of no long duration. Trajan died the year after, and was succeeded by Adrian, who

notwithstanding his profession of punishing none but for real crimes, soon renewed the bloody scenes of unprovoked cruelty, practised by his predecessor. Evaristus and Alexander, peaceful bishops of Rome, fell victims to Trajan's tyranny. Alexander had for his three next successors in the pontificate, Sixtus, Telesphorus, and Hyginus, all martyrs in their turn, the two first under Adrian, the last under Antoninus Pius, his successor in the empire. Numbers of others nobly died in defence of their faith under these anti-christian emperors. Animated with a true spirit of their profession, they esteemed it an honor and a happiness to die for their crucified Redeemer, who had first died for them. It grieved them indeed to hear their religion slandered by the heathens, and themselves accused of crimes, which their religion forbade, and their hearts abhorred. To wipe away these slanders, and to disabuse the ignorant heathens of their false notions, several learned Christians took up their pen, and laid before the public the sublime and moral principles of Christian practice and belief. Among the first of these writers appeared Justinus, who, from a Platonic philosopher, became a Christian about the thirtieth year of his age, after a diligent and sincere search after truth. Having once embraced it upon conviction, in which he was much strengthened by the patient sufferings of the martyrs, he ever after studied to adorn it by his virtues, and to defend it by his writings, till by a glorious martyrdom he sealed it with his blood.

In his apology, which he signed with his name, and addressed to Antoninus himself, to the Senate and whole Roman people, he intreats the emperor to form his judgment of the Christians from their actions, not from the name they bear, and not to pass sentence against them on the sole and weak pretence of their being called Christians. Let an

impartial inquiry be made, says he, let our conduct be diligently sifted, and if, upon examination, it shall be proved that we are either criminal in our actions, or impious in our tenets, let guilt be punished according to its deserts; but if our innocence shall be proved, it will be neither reasonable nor just to treat us like malefactors. With full confidence we defy our most determined enemies, to prove the crimes maliciously laid to our charge. Deign only to investigate our conduct, and to scrutinize our principles, you will with pleasure find, that of all the subjects of your empire, none are more submissive, none more loyal, none more disposed to keep and secure the public peace, than we Christians are. We acknowledge you for our sovereign, sole master of the conquered world. You we respect, and you we cheerfully obey in all things not repugnant to religion. Religious worship belongs to God alone. He is the supreme ruler of heaven and earth, the great creator of all things, omnipotent and eternal. In our daily supplications to him, we humbly beg, that to the imperial power with which he has invested you, he will vouchsafe to add the glorious prerogative of reigning with wisdom and justice. We adore him alone, who alone is God, the sovereign judge of all our actions. His adorable eye always sees us; he knows and beholds our most secret thoughts. Nothing escapes his all-comprehensive knowledge; his justice will assign to all men punishment or reward in a future life, according to their works in this. Such is our belief. This belief imposes on us a conscientious attention to ourselves, a strict rectitude in our whole conduct, public and private, which no human institutions can effect.

For their instructions in the more sublime truths of Christianity, Justin states in explicit terms the mystery of three distinct persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in

one and the same divine nature; he states the incarnation of the Son, who being the same eternal God with the Father, became man, and voluntarily permitted himself to be crucified by Pontius Pilate for our redemption, but rose again on the third day for our justification. He then expatiates upon the holiness and truth of the Christian system, which he proves from the inspired writings of the Prophets and Evangelists. To refute the slanders of the Heathens, who represented the private meetings of the Christians for religious worship, as assemblies of impiety and vice, he briefly relates what passed in them. For no other than a religious purpose, continues the Apologist, do we meet upon the Sunday. We meet to worship God our Creator, the sovereign ruler of the universe; we meet to hear the word of God, we meet to offer up to God and to partake of what we call the Eucharist, which is the true body and blood of Jesus Christ, the incarnate, under the form of bread and wine.

What impression this apology made upon a heathen emperor, we cannot say. He published no sanguinary edict, but during his reign many Christians suffered for their faith.

SECTION VI.

Extent and Unity of the Church.

(A. D. 158.) THE blood of the Martyrs was the seed of Christianity. The Pagans stood astonished at their invincible fortitude in the midst of torments. Divine they thought must be the religion, which inspired such lofty sentiments of God, which taught its followers such heroic virtues, such patience, such humility, such purity of manners,

such a contempt of wordly honors and delights. They flocked in crowds from every quarter to learn and embrace it. By the zeal and labor of apostolical men, the Church, though still in its infancy, was miraculously spread over almost all the known world. From the east, where it first began, it extended from province to province as far as the western ocean. Palestine, Syria, Egypt, Asia Minor, and Greece were full of Christians. Italy, Gaul, Spain, Germany, Africa, and Great Britain had begun to be acquainted with Christianity. Even in those countries, that lay beyond the flight of the Roman eagle, in Armenia, in Persia, in India, and other barbarous nations, peaceful ministers of the Gospel had planted the triumphant standard of the Cross.

However widely these people differed in language, manners, constitution, and climate, they all agreed in the profession of one God, one faith, and one baptism. "The difference of tongues and nations," says Irenæus,* "made no difference among them. The churches founded in Germany disagree not in their belief and doctrine, so neither do the churches of the Celtæ, nor of the Iberi, nor those in the east, nor in Egypt, nor in Lybia, nor those situated in the middle of the globe. But as the sun, which shines over all the earth, is one and the same luminary, so likewise is the preaching of the Gospel, which in every place enlightens all, who wish to share in the knowledge of truth." Thus the particular churches, that were planted over the face of the earth, under their respective bishops, being all united in one common bond of belief, form one universal Church, under one head, whom all acknowledge in the Bishop of Rome, the visible successor of St. Peter, the first of the Apostles. The Bishop of Rome holds from Christ an unlimited jurisdiction to feed the whole flock, sheep as well as

* L. i. c. 3.

lambs.* Other pastors have a limited jurisdiction to watch over and direct the particular flocks, committed to their charge, according to the received principles of faith and doctrine of the Catholic Church. But the Church, notwithstanding the zeal and vigilance of her pastors, even in those days, had the mortification to see many of her children swerve from the path of truth, and follow delusive guides through the crooked ways of falsehood and error. "Many appeared amongst us," says St. Justin,† "in the name of Christ with blasphemies in their mouth, teaching impure and impious doctrines. For of Christ they had nothing but the name. There are the Marcionites, the Valentinians, the Basilidians, the Saturninians, and others, bearing the appellation of those teachers, who were the founders of their sect. With none of these do we hold communion. We know their errors and their impieties." St. Justin here informs us, that in the second century, as well as in the first, false teachers appeared, who, by their impious doctrines disturbed the peace of the Church, and seduced the lovers of novelty into various heresies: and that the Church, zealous for truth and ever careful to preserve her unity of faith, publicly stigmatized the corrupters of her doctrine, and cut them off as tainted members from her communion, lest they should infect the whole body.

It has been observed above, that the Apostles in the beginning suffered their Jewish converts to continue in the observance of certain ceremonies of the Mosaic law, as long as they did not hold them necessary for salvation. On the charitable motive of disposing their countrymen to receive the Gospel, they sometimes conformed to those legal practices themselves, witness St. Paul in circumcising his disciple Timothy.‡ On the same motive St. John, the

* John, c. xxiv. † Dialogue with Tryphon. ‡ Acts, c. xvi, v. 3.

Evangelist seems to have celebrated Easter according to the ancient custom of the Jews, in keeping their Passover on the fourteenth day of the vernal equinoctial moon, on whatever day of the week it might chance to fall. The Asiatic churches still adhered to that practice, while the southern and western churches, guided by the authority of St. Peter and St. Paul, kept Easter-day on the Sunday following. Upon this point then there was a manifest difference between the east and west. But it was a point of ceremony only, a point of mere discipline, not of belief. For all believed the mystery of Christ's resurrection; their only disagreement was about the day, on which the memory of it was to be celebrated.

Pope Pius I. who succeeded Hyginus, wished to establish an uniformity of time in the observance of that great festival through the whole Church, and published an order to that effect. This drew St. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, to Rome, about the year 158. But Pius was then dead, and St. Anicetus had then succeeded him. Anicetus, following the steps of his predecessor, used his endeavors to persuade the Asiatic prelate into his opinion concerning the celebration of Easter-day. His arguments were strong, but Polycarp was tenacious of a custom which had been sanctioned by St. John, his evangelical master. Anicetus, out of respect to the Evangelist and his virtuous disciple, did not choose to urge his own Pontifical authority, and there the matter rested for the present. Both parted from each other with the most expressive marks of amity and mutual esteem. Their difference of opinion in a question of ecclesiastical discipline weakened not the bond of charity and faith, that linked them together in the same communion.

SECTION VII.

Fourth Persecution under Marcus Aurelius.

(A. D. 168.) UPON the death of Antoninus Pius in 161, two princes with joint power ascended the imperial throne, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and Lucius Verus. Aurelius had unfortunately imbibed strong prejudices against the Christians from the evil reports he heard of them. These prejudices broke out into outrageous acts of cruelty. The persecution began in Asia: Smyrna was the theatre of its bloody exhibitions. In that town the Roman proconsul had his residence: thither were Christians dragged in crowds to be tortured and executed. Their tortures were various and excruciating, as described in a letter written by the faithful of Smyrna to their absent brethren. Some were burnt, some crucified, others devoured by wild beasts. Many are torn with whips, says the writer, to such a degree, that their bones and very entrails are laid bare. The spectators melt into tears at the sight, their moans of compassion resound from every side, while from the heroic sufferers not a groan, not so much as a single sigh is heard. No kind of torture, no invention of ingenious barbarity is left untried to compel the confessors of Jesus Christ into a compliance with the Pagan superstitions. But the holy champions stand firm and unshaken in their faith. They fix their eyes and thoughts on heaven, they smile in the midst of torment, with a lively assurance, that their pains will soon end in everlasting joys. A young man, Germanicus by name, signalized himself in a very heroic manner. After a long and rude imprisonment, he was led to the circus to be torn to pieces by wild beasts. A lion was let loose from his den. The undaunted youth, eager to sacrifice

his life for Christ's sake, rushed forward to meet and provoke the furious animal to devour him. The spectators, vexed and disappointed to see such determined resolution in a Christian, tumultuously exclaimed, Away with the wretch, let Polycarp be brought.

When the persecution first broke out, Polycarp had been persuaded by his friends to retire out of the city into a neighboring village. There he lay concealed in safety, till wickedly betrayed. A troop of horsemen was sent by night to seize him. The bishop was in bed, when his host in great fright ran to tell him that the house was beset. God's will be done, said the Saint, and rose with the calmest composure. He went down stairs, met the men at the door, and having asked their errand, courteously invited them in, ordered them refreshment, and hoped they would allow him some short time to pray. He prayed in a standing posture for two hours, and then set off with them towards the city mounted upon an ass.

To give the reader some idea of the esteem, in which this illustrious Saint was held in the Church, I will here mention what St. Irenæus says of him in his letter to Florinus; both of them had been his disciples. Florinus was afterwards a priest among the clergy of Rome, but forgetting the lessons he had received from St. Polycarp, blasphemously affirmed, that God is the author of sin. To reclaim the unhappy man from his error, Irenæus wrote to him a letter, in which he says: "These things were not taught you by the bishops who preceded us. I could tell you the place where the blessed Polycarp sat to preach the word of God. It is yet present to my mind with what gravity he every where came in and went out; what was the sanctity of his deportment and of his whole exterior, and what were his holy exhortations to the people. I seem to hear him

now relate how he conversed with John and many others, who had seen Jesus Christ, and how he repeated the words he had heard from their lips. I can protest before God, that if this holy bishop had heard any error uttered like yours, he would have stopped his ears and hastened from the place." This short relation, quoted by Eusebius, * shows how watchful and how careful the bishops were in preserving the primitive doctrines unaltered, as they had received them from the first teachers of Christianity. They let no new doctrine pass unnoticed or uncensured, if adverse to the truths delivered to them by their apostolical predecessors.

SECTION VIII.

Martyrdom of St. Polycarp.

(A. D. 169.) ST. POLYCARP being brought before the proconsul, who was then sitting in judgment amidst a crowded audience, a voice, distinctly heard by many, suddenly issued from above, saying, *Polycarp be courageous and act manfully.* The proconsul began by exhorting him to respect his own grey hairs, to swear by the genius of Cæsar, and to say, *Exterminate the Impious,* meaning the Christians. The Saint was silent. Swear by the genius of Cæsar, said the proconsul again, blaspheme Christ, and I will discharge thee. Polycarp replied: I have served Christ these four-score and six years, and how can I now blaspheme him? From him I have received much good, never any harm. I cannot blaspheme my king and Saviour. You command

me to swear by the genius of Cæsar, as you call it. I am a Christian. We Christians are taught to pay due honor to our temporal sovereigns as far as is consistent with religion, no farther. I have wild beasts at my call, said the proconsul in a menacing tone. Let them come at your call, replied the Saint: my resolution is fixed not to be shaken. If you scorn the beasts, subjoined the proconsul, I will sentence you to be burnt to ashes. Polycarp answered, the fire you threaten me with, burns for a short time only, and then goes out. There is another fire, kindled for the punishment of evil, and it burns for ever. Bring against me what you will; I am ready; why do you delay? While he thus spoke, his countenance seemed to shine with a kind of heavenly cheerfulness, which struck the beholders and even the proconsul himself.

The public crier was, however, ordered to advance, as the custom was in capital cases, and thrice to proclaim aloud, *Polycarp hath confessed himself a Christian*. The crowd immediately shouted with insulting triumph, and, as with one voice, demanded that the impious teacher of Asia, the father of the Christians, and the destroyer of their gods should be burnt alive. Their request was no sooner granted, but Jews and Gentiles set out with eager speed to gather wood for his execution. The intrepid martyr, with his hands tied before him, was placed at the stake; heaps of wood and other combustibles were piled up around him. There standing and fixing his eyes on heaven, he uttered a most fervent prayer to God. Scarce had he said Amen, when the impatient mob set fire to the pile. The fire quickly increased to a rapid flame. But behold, as eye-witnesses of the fact relate,* the flames rose in the form of an

* Eusebius, L. iv,

arch gently encircling the body of the martyr, which appeared not like roasted flesh, but like purified gold, brightly shining through the flames, and emitting a sweet odour, equal to the most fragrant spices. The savage infidels, vexed to see his body still standing and unconsumed, commanded a spear-man to pierce it, which he did, and such a quantity of blood issued from its left side, as to quench the fire. The centurion, seeing a contest was likely to ensue about carrying off the body, kindled a fresh fire, and reduced the flesh to ashes. We then took up the bones, say the writers of this record, to us more precious than jewels, and deposited them decently in a place, where we hope annually to meet, and to celebrate with joy the birth-day of this illustrious martyr, that others may be animated by his example to endure the like trials. The heroic virtues of the Saints render their memory precious, and their relics sacred to the surviving brethren of their communion.

SECTION IX.

The thundering Legion.

(A. D. 176.) THE flame of persecution spread from east to west. With many others, Pope Anicetus at Rome fell a sacrifice to its fury. St. Soter succeeded him. For ten years and upwards, the Church had experienced an uninterrupted flow of sufferings and bloodshed, when God was pleased to interpose for the relief of his afflicted people. Aurelius had embarked in a war against the Sarmatæ and other hardy tribes of Germany, who were determined to make a stand for independent liberty, and for that purpose

had collected a formidable force. More eager than prudent in his pursuits of conquest, the emperor hastily advanced into the dry and mountainous parts of Bohemia, where he must have perished with his whole army for want of water, if the miraculous power of God had not saved him. The fact is related by Dion, the historian,* who attributes the miracle to Mercury the Pagan deity. The memory of this prodigy is preserved at Rome to the present day, in bass-relief on the Antonine column, which was then erected. The Romans are there represented with arms in their hands, the barbarians in confusion lie discomfited upon the ground, unable to face the storm of rain and hail, which seems to pour down with impetuous violence upon them. The emperor, in a letter to the Roman senate, gave a full account of this wonderful event. To that letter, Tertullian appeals in his apology. Whether the letter, which we find in some authors, be the original letter of Aurelius or not, critics have their doubts. But in this letter the emperor thus relates the fact.

“We were in the middle of Germany,” says he “hemmed in by mountains on one side, and on the other closely pressed by a formidable enemy, in numbers far superior to us. We were moreover fainting with thirst for want of water, which we had not tasted for five days. It was not possible to advance or retreat with any prospect of safety; to remain inactive was to perish by thirst. In this extremity, I put up my fervent supplications to the Gods for relief. The Gods were deaf. I knew there were many Christians in the army. I called them round me, and commanded them to address the Deity, I was a stranger to, in our behalf. We had hitherto been taught to look upon the Christians as an impious sect. We have been deceived.

Justice forces us to believe that they are in a special manner favored by their God. For no sooner did they fall upon their knees and begin to pray, than a copious and refreshing rain showered down from heaven. But the rain, which was so refreshing to us, drove furiously against our enemies, like a tempest of hail accompanied with vivid flashes of lightning and dreadful claps of thunder."

"Wherefore, since the prayers of this people are so efficacious with the most powerful God they adore, let us grant to the Christians full liberty of professing themselves such, lest they employ their prayers against us. My will is, that their religion be no longer considered as a crime in them. On account of religion, therefore, let none of them be henceforth accused, punished or molested. Such is my will. My will likewise is, that the senate immediately form a decree to that effect, that the said decree be fixed up in the forum of Trajan, and a copy of it sent to all governors of provinces throughout the empire."

Such is said to be the purport of Aurelius' letter to the Senate on this memorable event. The Christian soldiers, who, by their prayers, had rescued the Roman army from the brink of perishing for want of water, were either formed into a separate corps, distinguished by the name of the Thundering Legion, or incorporated with one which bore that name already.

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SECTION X.

Martyrs of Lyons.

(A. D. 179.) THE late favorable decree of Aurelius and the Roman senate encouraged many to become Christians, whom the dread of tortures had hitherto kept at a distance. The number of converts gave umbrage to the Pagan zealots.—The prejudices of a superstitious populace were easily stimulated into acts of violence. The infernal enemy of man could not calmly see his own empire falling, and the empire of Jesus Christ rising on its ruins. By his malicious machinations new disturbances against the Christians, and new persecutions began. After a three years' peace, the bloody sword was again unsheathed; Gaul, the scene of action, flowed with the blood of martyrs. Persecution is ever uniform in the injustice of her proceedings against truth. She first calumniates the innocent objects of her malice to make them odious, she then condemns and punishes them as real criminals, so pronounced by her iniquitous tribunals. In that manner the heathens proceeded against the Christians of Lyons, where the Gospel had gained many proselytes. They propagated the odious slanders, which were already current in other parts of the empire, that the Christians in their religious assemblies committed the most shameful impurities, and then feasted upon the flesh of a slaughtered infant.

Irritated by these slanderous reports, which the ignorant mob believed to be true, the idolatrous citizens of Lyons commenced a dreadful persecution. It was no longer safe for a known Christian to be seen in public. Many of the most distinguished either for rank or piety, were dragged before the magistrates and cast into prison. Amongst

these was the venerable bishop Pothinus, near a hundred years old. Age had not extinguished in him the vigor of youth, when called upon to give testimony of his faith. He was for some time left to the mercy of an exasperated rabble, that loaded him with every kind of insult and outrage. They beat, they kicked, they wounded him in a most barbarous manner, when he was rescued scarce alive from their murderous hands to be thrown into a dungeon, where he died of his wounds two days after.

Magistrates and people seem to have been equally hardened against every feeling of humanity: they singled out eight and forty of their Christian prisoners, whom they wantonly devoted to the most shocking torments. Their modes of torture were so multiplied, and strained to such excess, that many actually expired under them. Some were stretched upon the rack and disjoined in every limb, while their flesh was torn away with iron hooks to the very bone, and heated plates of brass were applied to their sides and other parts, so that the whole body was but one continued wound. In that state they were carried back to prison to undergo the same torments next day. Some were thrown to wild beasts, some tossed and gored by mad bulls, and others compelled to sit in red-hot chairs of iron, till they were roasted almost to death for the savage amusement of barbarous heathens. Yet not a single groan was heard, and no complaint was uttered by any of these illustrious champions amidst all their sufferings: with invincible fortitude they persisted in the combat, till the sword put a happy period to their pains. The rage of their persecutors was not satiated; but their malice was confounded to see itself defeated, and the religion of Jesus Christ triumphant in the death of his martyrs. Blandina, a servant maid, distinguished herself in a most conspicuous manner among

the rest by the undaunted courage, with which she met and overcame the most dreadful torments.

The inhumanity of the pagans extended even to the dead. They cast the bodies of these blessed martyrs to the dogs; then gathering up the mangled remains, they committed them to the flames, and threw their ashes into the Rhone, to prevent the faithful from paying them that honor, which they knew was paid by Christians to other martyrs. A detailed narrative of the bloody scenes exhibited in this persecution, is given in a letter which the church of Lyons wrote to their brethren of Asia.—The short account here given, is extracted from that authentic letter.

SECTION XI.

Other Martyrs of Gaul.

(A. D. 179.) FROM Lyons the faith had spread to the neighboring parts of Gaul; thither the flame of persecution likewise spread, and put the constancy of the new proselytes to a fiery trial. These faithful followers of their crucified Lord, displayed a courage worthy of themselves and of the religion they had embraced. The city of Lyons had the honor of adding two noble youths to their list. Epipodius and Alexander, two gentlemen of that city, both in the flower of their age, were inseparable friends from the time they finished their studies in the same school. Religion had spiritualized their friendship: the study and practice of all Christian virtues had fitted them out for martyrdom. Finding themselves denounced to the Roman governor, they secretly left the city, and retired to a neighboring village,

where they lay concealed for a time in the house of a poor christian widow. Being at last discovered, they were arrested, and without any previous examination, committed to prison. Three days after, they were brought, with their hands tied behind them, before the governor's tribunal. There, at the very first question they professed themselves Christians, without disguise and without fear: loud murmurs of the people rose on every side, the judge in anger exclaimed: To what purpose has the rack and other tortures been employed, if hardened wretches still dare to transgress our laws, and profess the name of Christ? Then, lest each other's presence might encourage them to resist, he ordered Alexander, the elder of the two, to be led back to prison, hoping to gain Epipodius by caresses and fair promises.

In the language of a false deluded world, he thus addressed him: "Epipodius, it ill becomes you to be thus obstinate in throwing away your life. We adore the immortal Gods, whom the emperors and all the world adore. We adore them with joy, with festivity, and public diversions. You adore a crucified man, with whom your very homage finds not acceptance, if accompanied with sensual delights. Quit this misplaced severity for the sweet enjoyments of life, which better suit your age and rank." Epipodius replied: "The compassion you affect to show me is cruelty in fact. It tends to destroy me forever; I shall not suffer myself to be seduced. To you the mysteries of God are not known. You know not, that Jesus Christ, whom in contempt you call the crucified Man, is likewise God: he is again risen from the dead, and has opened to his faithful servants the gate of heavenly bliss. This, perhaps, is a language you do not understand. I will then tell you what you cannot but understand: that man is composed of two

substances, a body and soul. With us, Christians, the soul commands, as being the most noble of the two ; the body is subservient. The brutal pleasures you indulge in honor of your pretended deities, flatter, indeed, your corporeal senses, but they kill the soul. We, on the contrary, lay our sensual appetites under due restraint, that the soul may live, and maintain her empire. You, after having defiled yourselves with abominations, like brute beasts, find nothing at last but a sorrowful death, whilst we joyfully pass through the short sufferings you heap upon us, into life everlasting."

The judge, being exasperated at this reply, ordered him to be struck upon the mouth, then stretched upon the rack, to be torn with iron hooks, and finally beheaded. Two days after he called Alexander to the bar. He began to try his constancy by relating to him the torments that Epi-podius had undergone, hoping that the dread of undergoing the like might terrify him into a compliance. The relation only served to animate the zeal of Alexander, and to quicken his desire of being soon united to his friend by martyrdom. The judge, swelling with rage to see himself baffled, sentenced him to be first tortured, and then crucified. The tortures, which the intrepid martyr underwent, were so violent, that his entrails appeared through his uncovered ribs, and his bones hung as if they were all broken or dislocated. Spent with pain, he was no sooner fastened to the cross, than he gave up his soul to Christ, whom he never ceased to invoke as long as he had strength to speak.

A similar example of Christian fortitude was exhibited about the same time at Autun, by another noble youth, called Symphorianus. This zealous young man had expressed his abhorrence of the superstitious honors paid to Cybele, a pagan goddess. He was apprehended and carried before the governor, a fiery zealot for the worship

of his false gods, and lately come with a full determination to exterminate every Christian in the place. Seeing Symphorianus standing before the tribunal, How is it, said he to him, that thou hast eluded my vigilance? I thought I had cleared the city of all those who call themselves Christians. Tell me why thou refusest to adore the great Cybele? I am a Christian, replied Symphorianus. I adore but one God, who reigns in heaven. Your idol is an invention of the evil spirit, a deceitful artifice for the destruction of souls. The judge said: Art thou ignorant of the imperial mandate, which makes it death for all who refuse to worship the gods? I only fear the supreme omnipotent God, who has created me, answered the intrepid youth. Him only do I worship. My body is at your disposal; not so my soul. I fear not death. My God has given me life, my duty is to give it to him back again, whenever he demands it. He is the rewarder of virtue as well as the punisher of vice. I never can receive the heavenly rewards of virtue but by my perseverance in the glorious confession of his holy name. All earthly goods are borne away by time as by a rapid torrent. Nothing under the sun is permanent. Permanent happiness is the gift of God alone. The glory and the happiness he bestows is eternal, like himself. The beginning of his existence no antiquity the most remote has ever seen, and no succession of ages shall ever see it end. The judge grew angry at such discourse, and as the holy youth persisted in his refusal of worshipping the gods, condemned him to be beheaded.

These attested cruelties of a persecution, either encouraged or connived at by a philosophic emperor, in contradiction to his own decree, show how little the most flattering promises of a capricious prince are to be relied on. By an unprincipled, and self-interested world, how soon are the

most signal services forgotten, or repaid with ingratitude ! But Aurelius, perhaps, is not to be directly charged with the whole blame. The sanguinary edicts of Nero and Domitian not being recalled, they were liable to be enforced at every popular commotion, or at the will of any whimsical governor of a province. On this account the rod of persecution seldom ceased from being felt in some part or other of the Roman empire. Pope Anicetus, and Soter, his successor, suffered in Rome itself.

SECTION XII.

Lucius, King of Great Britain.

(A. D. 183.) MARCUS AURELIUS died in 180, and was succeeded by his son Commodus, a profligate and giddy prince, in the twentieth year of his age. Under the benign influence of the late emperor's edict against persecution, the Christian faith began to shoot forth its branches in the island of Great Britain. That kingdom, though subdued in great part by the Roman arms, and reduced to a tributary province, was still permitted to retain its ancient laws and internal mode of government under the protection of Rome. From the reign of Claudius to that of Commodus, a free and frequent intercourse had been open between the two countries. Of the Britons, who went to Rome, many, as it seems, became acquainted with the principles of Christianity, which they carried back into their own country.

St. Timotheus, the son of Pudens, a Roman senator, and of Claudia, a British lady, both mentioned by St. Paul,*

* 2 Tim. c. iv, v. 21.

had been ordained priest by Pope Pius I., and sent to teach the faith in Britain. St. Marcellus, a Briton by birth, and afterwards bishop of Treves, had also preached the gospel to his countrymen. St. Joseph of Arimathea, with eleven Christian companions, is said, on plausible authority, though denied by others, to have landed in our island, and to have settled in a place called Avallonia, where Glastonbury now stands. But be this as it may, it is certain from ancient authors, that the Gospel had found its way into Great Britain, before the reign of King Lucius, although no bishop and no regular Church had been yet established.

Lucius, surnamed the Pious on account of his good qualities, was the son of Coilus, who reigned under the emperor Trajan and his successor Adriam, to the year 123. By frequently conversing with Christians, Lucius had imbibed a favorable opinion of their doctrines, and being now king, under no controul, was inclined to embrace them. The good disposition of his subjects, and the late edict for religious toleration, published by Aurelius, seconded his inclination. Commodus was too busily engaged in youthful frolics and amusements to think of persecuting men for their religion. Lucius therefore deputed two of his subjects, named Eluan and Meduan, to St. Eleutherius at Rome, who had lately succeeded St. Soter in St. Peter's chair.

Some sceptics have affected to doubt, says Mr. Camden, whether such a man as king Lucius ever existed, but the fact is so well ascertained against them, as to put it out of dispute. Then speaking of king Lucius, he says, This prince, as we find in the ancient reports and lives of martyrs usually read in the Churches, "admiring the integrity and holiness of the Christians, sent Eluanus and Meduanus, two Britons, to Pope Eleutherius, intreating him, that he and his subjects might be instructed in the Christian religion.

Upon this, the Pope immediately dispatched certain holy men thither, namely, Fugatius and Damianus with letters which are yet extant."

Fugatius and Damianus were Roman clergymen well qualified with piety and learning for the important business they were sent upon. They went in company with the British envoys Meduan and Eluan, the latter of whom had been ordained bishop during his stay at Rome. These holy missionaries immediately repaired to the royal palace, where they found the king and queen piously disposed and waiting for instruction. They instructed and solemnly baptized them both. This memorable event happened in the year 183. The nobility, the Druids, the people flocked round in crowds to follow their sovereign's example. Many of the Druids were men of learning, and after their conversion, became virtuous ministers of the Church. The idols of the Gods were pulled down, their altars overturned, and their temples consecrated into Christian churches.

Great Britain had thus the honor of being governed by the first Christian king, and was happy above all other countries in publicly professing the Christian faith by royal authority. This faith, as the venerable Bede* and all ancient writers unanimously affirm, she received from the Roman See, and preserved inviolate till the Saxon conquest. In opposition to these respectable authorities, the centurion† of Magdeburg, four devoted enemies of Rome, have ventured on their own credit to assert, that Great Britain never received her faith from Rome, but from Jerusalem, or from Greece, or from some oriental teachers independent of, and unconnected with the Roman See. To give some show of plausibility to their groundless assertion, they recur to arbitrary suppositions, and to vague conjectures, drawn

* L. 1.

† Cent.

from posterior facts, which prove nothing. The assertion, however, though destitute of proof, has been loudly echoed by their anti-catholic brethren of England, by a Matthew Parker, by the apostate Bale, by a Francis Godwin, a John Speed, and other Cisalpine favorers of schism. Suppositions and conjectures are but frothy arguments against the concurrent testimonies of preceding ages. To establish a fact of such importance, and at such a distance of time, when all the world was prepossessed with a contrary opinion, it was incumbent on them to adduce positive and undeniable evidence for its support. This they have not done; whence we may fairly conclude, they could not. On no authentic record, and in no ancient author does it appear, nor dare they determine, from what particular country these pretended oriental teachers came, at what time they came, by what name they were known, and by whom they were sent.



SECTION XIII.

Progress of Christianity in Great Britain.

(A. D. 188.) THREE years after their arrival, the holy prelates, Fugatius and Damianus, went back to Rome, as Matthew of Westminster relates, and reported to Eleutherius the success of their mission. Eleutherius approved of all they had done, and sent them back with many others, whose names and acts are recorded by St. Gildas, a British historian, in his book of the victory of Aurelius Ambrosius. By the doctrine and zeal of these apostolical missionaries, religion began to shine through the island. Three episcopal sees

were erected at London, at York, and in the middle part of the kingdom; priests were ordained for the administration of the holy sacraments, churches were consecrated for the divine service, public and private schools were opened for the instruction of youth, a regular form, in fine, of ecclesiastical discipline, conformable to that of Rome, was established and sanctioned by St. Eleutherius, the Roman Pontiff, as king Lucius had requested.

In no article of faith, and in no point of public discipline did the British Church at that time differ from the Roman See. The rule followed by Rome in the observance of Easter was then followed by Great Britain, and when she afterwards deviated from that rule, it was through ignorance, in consequence of a mistake borrowed from the Scots, who erred in calculating the time. But her mistake in that respect led her into a practice, which equally differed from that of Asia, as from that of Rome. Asia kept Easter-day on the fourteenth day of the vernal equinoctial moon, whatever might be the day of the week. Britain, even after her mistake, kept it always upon a Sunday, though not always upon the same Sunday with Rome. Such being the fact, we should scarce believe, did we not read it in their writings, that men famed for learning could advance it as an argument, that Great Britain received her faith from the east, because she once differed from the west in her observance of Easter-day. To form their argument they should first have proved, that she received the practice with her faith, and that her practice was the same as that of Asia. But it happens unfortunately for them, that Great Britain erred in the observance of Easter, long after she had received the faith, and that when she erred, her error essentially differed from that of Asia.

To establish a uniformity in the celebration of Easter-day throughout the Church, had long been the wish and endeavor of the Roman Pontiffs. Our blessed Redeemer had risen from the dead upon a Sunday: in memory of that glorious mystery, the Jewish Sabbath had been altered from Saturday to Sunday by ecclesiastical authority; after which it seemed absurd to celebrate the feast of the Resurrection on any other day than a Sunday. A charitable consideration for the Jews had first given rise to the toleration in Asia; the motive for that toleration was now completely done away by the ruin of the Jewish nation; the continuation of it began to cause scandal among the faithful; by some it was condemned as a blot in ecclesiastical discipline.

For these reasons, St. Victor, the good and zealous successor of Eleutherius in 192, began to exert himself in the affair of Easter, with greater vigor than any of his predecessors. But before he proceeded to an absolute decision of the question, he despatched letters to the provincial churches, desiring the bishops to assemble and give him their opinion upon the matter. Conformably to his desire, the bishops assembled in their respective provinces, in Gaul, in Pontus, at Rome, at Cæsarea in Palestine, at Corinth, at Ephesus, and in other parts of the empire. In every place, except Ephesus, there was but one opinion, and this opinion was, that the Roman custom for celebrating Easter upon the Sunday was sanctioned by apostolic authority and apostolic tradition, and ought to be observed by all. From this general opinion of the bishops, Polycrates, the bishop of Ephesus, thought proper to dissent. He grounded his dissent upon the practice of his pious predecessors, nor could he, by any argument or reason, be prevailed upon to abandon a practice which he found established in his Church. His authority induced some other bishops of Asia Minor to

retain the same practice. Their obstinacy gave great offence: Victor apprehended from what he had seen in Rome, lest their conduct might prove the cause of schism in the Church, and was inclined to pronounce severe censures against them on that account. Judaic prejudices, it seems, were not yet torn away; the time was not yet come for enforcing an unanimity in the celebration of Easter through the universal Church. St. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, interfered in the name of the bishops of Gaul, and strongly represented to the holy Father, that in the present dispute, severe censures were likely to produce more harm than good. Upon this, Victor prudently desisted from all further proceedings, and Ephesus and some few churches of Asia Minor were quietly left in possession of their former practice, till the question was finally decided in the general Council of Nice.

SECTION XIV.

View of the Catholic Doctrine in the Second Century.

(A. D. 200.) FOR vouchers of the doctrine, held and taught by the Catholic Church in the second century, we have the holy Fathers, who lived and wrote during that period; and their writings have been faithfully handed down to the present times. We have the genuine writings of St. Ignatius, second bishop of Antioch after St. Peter, we have the epistle of St. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, both disciples of St. John the apostle and evangelist; we have the apologies of St. Justin, we have the instructive and eloquent compositions of St. Clement, a learned priest of Alexandria,

we have the works of Tertullian, the treatise of Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, all writers of the second century. In that age, Tertullian assures us that the one, the true, the orthodox faith of Christ triumphed in Britain, in Spain, in Dacia, in Scythia, and in other countries inaccessible to the Roman arms. From the testimony of these writers, we learn that the doctrine of the real presence of Christ's Body and Blood in the holy Eucharist, the sacrifice of the Mass, the veneration for saints, and prayers for the faithful departed, were articles of that orthodox faith, which then so widely triumphed.

For the instruction of his own and all succeeding times, St. Irenæus composed a treatise, divided into five books, wherein he specifies the prominent points of Catholic belief, and refutes the various heresies, which at different times had infested the Church, from the days of Simon the Magician, to the fall of Tatian. Irenæus had learned his principles of faith from St. Polycarp, the disciple of St. John: he was an accomplished scholar, an acute observer, as Tertullian testifies, and a judicious critic. His virtues raised him to the episcopal See of Lyons, after the death of Pothinus. By a glorious martyrdom under Severus, he confirmed the doctrines, which he had learned and taught. His doctrines are primitive, drawn from the apostolical source of truth; his testimony is above all exception: it perfectly agrees with that of his cotemporaries, as the reader may observe by the short extracts made above from Ignatius and Justin.

As the groundwork of true religion, this venerable author begins by asserting against all unbelievers, that there is a God, one only supreme self-existing Being, eternal and omnipotent; that in God there are three divine persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, really distinguished from one another, yet making but one and the same God;

that by this God the world has been created, and that from him we receive every necessary help for salvation: that the eternal Son is become incarnate for our redemption, without which we could not have been cleansed from the sin entailed upon us by the disobedience of our first parents; that from the time of his incarnation, he is both God and Man, Jesus Christ by name, truly Lord and truly God, as the Scriptures testify: that he took flesh, not from Joseph, but from the Virgin Mary only; that he suffered a real death upon the cross; that at his last supper, on the eve before his death, he left to us by a wonderful institution, his real Body and Blood, for the spiritual nourishment of our souls in the holy Eucharist; that this is the Christian sacrifice, the pure victim, and clean oblation, which the Church daily offers up to God from the rising to the setting of the sun, as the prophet Malachias long ago foretold.* In confirmation of these doctrines, which the Apostles taught, he mentions the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which were still visible, and the miraculous powers, which were then frequent, and which no dissenting sectaries ever presumed to claim.

Against the various heresies that disgraced the Christian name, he opposes the uniform doctrine of the Catholic Church, universally spread through the eastern and western hemisphere, every where shining like the sun, and enlightening all with the same rays of divine faith. This unity of faith he proves from scripture, but more forcibly from the apostolical tradition. The obscure and figurative passages of holy writ are liable to a wrong construction, as he justly observes, and false teachers, by the arbitrary interpretations of private judgment had actually wrested them to their own perverse purposes. But by tradition he shows that the true sense of scripture was clearly ascertained, and in the

* C. 1.

Church never could be otherwise than rightly understood. The Apostles, says he, undoubtedly understood the doctrines which they had distinctly heard from the mouth of their divine master, Jesus Christ. Those doctrines, which the sacred penmen were inspired to write, they fully explained and delivered to their successors in the ministry; that is, to those orthodox ministers who were successively appointed to instruct and govern the faithful in the business of salvation. Consequently no new doctrine can be started, and no new tenet introduced without being perceived and censured by those vigilant pastors who preside in the Church.

The See of Rome, continues the enlightened bishop, is the seat and centre of unity; it is known by all nations; it was founded by St. Peter; there St. Paul preached, and there they both shed their blood. With that See, on account of its powerful primacy, every orthodox See, that is to say, the whole body of Catholics wherever situated, whether in Egypt, in Libya, in Germany, in Italy, in Spain, or Gaul, is in communion. In that See, the tradition of the Apostles is faithfully preserved, as all true believers witness, and the succession of its bishops from St. Peter to Eleutherius manifestly shows. To that supreme See, every doubtful question of belief and discipline is usually preferred, and by the decisions of that See, heresy is either silenced or confounded.

Such is the exposition of primitive doctrine, which Irenæus, the bishop of Lyons, has given us in his book against heresies. He wrote it in Greek, for he was a Greek by birth. Of the several sectaries, that sprung up in the second century, the most noted were the Montanists, and the Tatianists, called the Encratitæ, or the continent, because they condemned marriage as no less criminal than adultery. The first are so named from Montanus, a new convert in Mysia, who aspiring to ecclesiastical preferment, and being

disappointed in his ambitious views, commenced false prophet, and preached against the Church. He proudly set himself above the Apostles, affected an austere life, and denied that the Church had power to forgive the sins of idolatry, of murder, and impurity. Tatian, the father of the Encratitæ, was a Syrian by birth, a Platonic Philosopher by profession, and had been a disciple of St. Justin. He taught some time at Rome, then returning into Syria he there broached his errors, which he chiefly borrowed from Marcion, Valentinus, and Saturninus, teaching two principles, and asserting that the Creator is the evil spirit of God. In consecrating the Eucharist he would have nothing used but water, because he condemned the use of wine entirely, as likewise the use of flesh meat. The ancients observe that Tatian's fall was owing to his pride.

To conclude the view of Catholic doctrine in the second century, there is one article, both of practice and belief, mentioned by Tertullian, which claims particular notice; it is the article of praying for the Dead. On this subject Tertullian thus writes: * “We make oblations for the Dead on the anniversary of their departure. This practice, though not found in Scripture, is authorised by tradition, confirmed by custom, and observed by faith.” This charitable and religious practice necessarily includes the belief of a Purgatory, or of a middle state of souls, after their departure out of this world. For to none, but such as are in a state of purgation before they are admitted to the beatific vision, can our oblations be of any avail. They in heaven are completely happy, and want nothing; they in hell can never be released from the fiery prison, to which they are condemned forever without hope of the least relief.

* *De cor. militis.*

CENTURY III.

SECTION I.

Fifth Persecution under Severus.

(A. D. 202.) FROM the death of Aurelius, in 180, the Church enjoyed a free exercise of religion for upwards of twenty years, during the successive reigns of Commodus and Pertinax, and the seven first years of that of Severus. The reign of Pertinax was short, his death tragical, like that of his predecessor. Several competitors for the crown then started up; Severus supplanted them all by his activity, and by securing a decree of the Senate, firmly seated himself in the imperial throne. For the first seven years of his reign he was thought to be no enemy of the Christians; he had even shown some marks of kindness towards them, when, without the least provocation, or any apparent reason, he published the most sanguinary edicts, severely forbidding them to hold their religious assemblies, and to profess the name of Christ. A dreadful persecution immediately commenced in Egypt, in Gaul, and Africa, which was carried on with such violence, that the faithful fancied the time of Anti-christ was come. Thousands were sacrificed in Egypt by a variety of torments, many of them by a slow fire. Potamiana, a beautiful female slave, was let down by slow degrees into a vessel of boiling pitch, so that her martyrdom was prolonged, with piercing pain, to three full hours, before life was extinguished. She had the offer of purchasing her life at the expense of her chastity, but the grace of Jesus Christ gloriously triumphed in her virtuous

perseverance, to the admiration of all who were witnesses of her sufferings.

In Gaul, the storm fell peculiarly heavy. Severus having observed that the number of Christians was surprisingly increased at Lyons, ordered troops to surround the town, that none might escape, while others broke into the houses, and without exception, butchered all who professed themselves Christians. The streets ran with Christian blood. The venerable bishop Irenæus was sacrificed with the rest, who are said to have been nineteen thousand in number, besides women and children. The tyrant boasted that he had at once dispatched the pastor and all his flock.

From Lyons the persecution spread with equal violence to Carthage. Then, for the first time, was the sword unsheathed in Africa against the Christian name. Twelve chosen confessors, charged with no other crime than that of being Christians, were carried before the tribunal of Saturninus, the proconsul. The accusation being lodged in form, the proconsul told them that it was in their power to gain the emperor's good graces at any rate, with a few grains of incense burnt in honor of the immortal gods; and that not to do it, would be a crime of disobedience to the imperial laws. The martyrs answered, that they were by principle submissive to the laws, as far as the civil power was concerned; that they were ready to obey the emperor in every thing that derogated not from the honor and obedience which is due to God, the sovereign Lord of all things; that they adored him alone, and could adore no other. The judge peremptorily sentenced them all to be beheaded.

Six more of the same city, four young men and two married women, in the flower of their youth, were denounced on the same charge of being Christians. These were called Perpetua and Felicitas; the first was of noble birth, and

had an infant at her breast, the latter was eight months gone with child. No regard was had either for their sex or for the delicate situation they were in. The unfeeling judge condemned them to be exposed to wild beasts in the amphitheatre for the barbarous entertainment of an African mob. They were confined in prison till the day came for their execution. In the interim, they earnestly joined in prayer, that Felicitas might be first brought to bed before the day of combat. Their prayers were heard; she was safely delivered of a daughter, whom a Christian woman undertook to nurse with the same care, as if it were her own. Perpetua had more conflicts than one to undergo. She had the tender feelings of a mother to sacrifice, in being torn from her sucking infant; she had the alternate grief and anger, the reproaches and intreaties of a Pagan father to contend with; she had the terror of being mangled and devoured alive by wild beasts, constantly upon her mind. But God, the sole object of her hope and love, comforted and strengthened her by his special grace. The day of combat was now at hand; the jailor summoned the blessed martyrs to prepare; they went joyfully from their dark dungeons to the amphitheatre, as to the field of triumph. When they came to the gate, the guards offered them superstitious habits, according to custom: to the men a red mantle, usually worn by the priests of Saturn; to the women, a white fillet to be tied around the head, which would have marked them for priestesses of Ceres. They scornfully rejected the superstitious trappings of idolatry, and the tribune consented to let them pass on in their own dress. Different kinds of savage animals were let loose upon the men, Perpetua and Felicitas were tossed by a wild cow. They received no mortal hurt; but as they survived the combat, appointed gladiators hacked them to death;

their bodies sunk down by repeated wounds, their souls in triumph rose to the mansions of eternal bliss.

SECTION II.

Tertullian.

(A. D. 207.) DURING the fury of this persecution, Tertullian, a learned priest of Carthage, published an apology, which is considered as a master-piece of eloquence, in support of the Christian religion. He begins with a pathetic complaint, that the Christians were condemned to insufferable torments without being allowed to speak in their own defence, a privilege never refused to the most criminal malefactors among the heathens. In answer to the reproach thrown upon them for not adoring the gods of the empire, Tertullian brings to light the base origin of those Pagan deities, exposes the absurdity of their worship, and the indecency of their ceremonies, and then in a flow of brilliant eloquence, expatiates upon the noble, the holy and sublime prerogatives of the Christian religion.

The object of the Christian worship, says he, is the one only Cod, who by his omnipotence has drawn the universe out of nothing, who by his wisdom has arranged it in the beauteous order we behold, who by his providence preserves and governs it through all its parts according to that harmonious system, which he first ordained. The wonderful works we admire in nature, the earth, the sea, the sun, the stars, and firmanent of heaven proclaim the glory, the power and the wisdom of this supreme Being. This is the God, who has given the most authentic testimony of himself

both by word and work. He is the God, who privileges some of his adorers with the gift of miracles in confirmation of the truths he has revealed. He is the God, who inspired the ancient prophets to foretell the secrets of future times, as appears in their sacred writings. The authenticity of these writings cannot be called in doubt, it is acknowledged by our enemies, the Jews: the writings themselves are in their hands, they are regularly read by them in their synagogues. The antiquity of these writings cannot be contested. Moses, the first of these inspired penmen, lived long before any mention was made of a Greek, or a Roman author. The prophets, who came after him, are as ancient as your first legislators, and your first historians. The accomplishment of their predictions, which could not be then subject to human foresight, not only proves the inspiration to have been divine, but also vouches that the revelation is indisputably true. Amongst other remarkable events, predicted in these prophetic writings, is the fatal catastrophe, which we have seen befall the Jewish people, the once cherished people of the most high God. The total ruin of their city, and the dispersion of their whole nation, in the very manner it was foretold, visibly mark the avenging hand of divine justice, and verify the prophecy. By the Roman arms they are stripped of their national existence, as the prophet Daniel had predicted above five hundred years before it happened, they are driven like herds of slaves from their native soil, they are thrown into a deep and lasting gulph of desolation, they wander through the world without laws, without a settlement, without protection, without an altar, without sacrifice.

The same divine oracles that foretold the extirpation of the Jewish nation, likewise indicate a more faithful race of believers, whom God had decreed to gather to himself out

of all nations under the sun, and to make his heirs to those choice blessings, which the Jews had ungratefully rejected. These faithful believers are the converted Gentiles, who, obedient to the divine call, forsake their idols, and profess the faith and law of Jesus Christ, the founder of the Christian religion. The mention of Jesus Christ leads the learned writer to tell his heathen readers who Jesus Christ is, to declare his divine and human nature, his eternal existence before all ages, and his temporal assumption of mortal flesh in the womb of a pure Virgin, as the prophet Isaiah had announced to the world about seven hundred years before that supernatural event took place. The event, says he, is of too mysterious a nature to be foreseen, or even to enter the thought of man, unless by divine inspiration. Jerusalem and all Judea witnessed the visible humanity of the Son of God, his miracles and resurrection from the tomb, evince his divinity beyond a doubt. The circumstances attending his death, continues the apologist, appeared so wonderful to the Pagan, that Pontius Pilate wrote a full account of them to Tiberius Cæsar, that the account was deposited in the Roman archives, and that Tiberius would have professed himself a Christian, had it been compatible with his temporal interest.

Having thus established the Christian system of religion on its own divine basis, Tertullian next proceeds to refute the slanders, urged by Pagans, against his Christian brethren. He states the respectability of their numbers in the towns, in the villages, in the fields, in the army, in their ships, and in the senate itself. He then makes a solemn appeal to the public at large, and with confidence defies them to prove any criminal charge against the fidelity of Christians to their sovereign, against their submission to the civil laws of the empire, or against their moral conduct and

general deportment with respect to the duties of social life : from whence he concludes how unjustifiable it must be to persecute, to torture, and to kill such unoffending subjects, merely for their religion.

Such, in substance, is the apology which Tertullian composed and sent to the Roman provincial governors. The storm of persecution relented soon after, but whether to the apology, or to some other cause that is to be attributed, we cannot affirm. Happy for the author would it have been, had he persevered in the sentiments which he has so happily expressed. But with all his eminent qualities, Tertullian wanted humility ; erudition made him proud. His harsh and stubborn temper hurried him into a system of severity repugnant to the gospel. He fell into the errors of Montanus, concerning the unlawfulness of second marriages, and the expulsion of certain sinners from the grace of repentance. These errors had been condemned by St. Zephyrinus, the successor of Victor, and the condemnation was received almost universally by the bishops in the provinces. This provoked the spleen of Tertullian, who felt himself wounded by the censure. He grew violent and refractory, Sullen resentment prompted him to debase his style in insolent invective against his ecclesiastical superiors. He is thought to have died in his errors, anno 216, a melancholy example of obstinate, self-sufficient [pride. He was married, but lived continent, after he took holy orders.

SECTION III.

Sixth Persecution under Maximin.

(A. D. 237.) FROM the barbarous occupation of persecuting harmless Christians, Severus was suddenly called to provide for the preservation of one of his most distant provinces. The Caledonians, a fierce and restless race of savages, inhabiting the northern part of our island, had poured down, like a torrent from the mountains, into that part of Great Britain which was subject to the Romans. The governor had not a sufficient force at hand to oppose them, nor had the Britons any native prince invested with authority to collect and head the national troops against the common enemy. For king Lucius was then dead, without issue, and without a successor. The governor informed Severus of the critical situation he was in, and moreover added, that a strong body of men, commanded by the emperor in person, would be necessary to drive back the invaders. Severus, naturally fond of military achievements, adopted the governor's advice, and crossed the sea with a powerful army into Britain. His two sons, Antoninus Caracalla and Geta, accompanied him in that expedition. The Caledonians he routed and pursued, though with great loss of men, into their mountains and extreme recesses of the island, as Dion, a cotemporary historian, relates. To guard against their predatory incursions for the future, he ordered a stone wall, with turrets at certain distances, to be built quite across the island, from one sea to the other: it is called the Picts' wall, of which some remains are to be seen at this day.

But Severus had more dangerous enemies to guard against, in his two sons, whom he designed for his joint

heirs and successors to the throne. These unprincipled youths, being eager to grasp the sceptre, made several attempts upon their father's life. Their unnatural conduct so shocked the aged emperor, already worn down with infirmity and the gout, that he sickened at the thought, and soon after died at York, in 213. The poet Claudian's remark, that majesty and friendship never well agree, nor continue long together upon the same throne, was strictly exemplified in the two imperial brothers, Caracalla and Geta. Their ambition could not rest, while some greater honor was in view. Each sought to reign alone at the expense of the other's life. Scarcely had they reached Rome, when Caracalla procured his brother's death by the hand of an assassin. At the end of four years he himself met with the same bloody fate from the dagger of Macrinus, commander of the guards. Macrinus enjoyed his ill-gotten crown but one year, when, being slain by his own soldiers, he made room for his son, Antoninus Heliogabalus. The execrable impurities of this emperor rendered him odious to all mankind. After a short and infamous reign, his guards murdered and threw him into the Tiber. Alexander Severus, his cousin-german, a prince of amiable qualities and friendly to the Christian religion, succeeded him in the year 224.

Although this emperor gave no encouragement to persecution, yet, by connivance, many suffered martyrdom under his reign, amongst whom St. Cecilia and Pope Callistus, the successor of St. Zephyrinus, are found in some ancient records. Callistus is said to have confirmed, by a special decree, the fast of ember days, which, by apostolical tradition, had hitherto been piously observed four times in the year, without any written law to enforce it. He was succeeded in the pontificate by Urbanus, whom the Centurians of Magdeburg commended for his learning and

sanctity of life. He crowned his other virtues by martyrdom, and had for his successor St. Pontianus. The emperor Alexander, after having triumphed over the Persians, marched with an army against the Germans, who had revolted. There, by the contrivance of Maximin, who had gained the good will of the army, he was treacherously slain.

Maximin was by birth a Thracian, a shepherd by profession; by his savage courage he had risen to the first military honors; his fierce and bulky stature made the soldiers look up to him as a chief worthy of the empire. Being naturally cruel, and now raised above all control, he published a bloody edict against the Christians, to whose tolerated worship of Jesus Christ he stupidly attributed the late calamities that had befallen the empire. He pointed not his shafts against the great body of Christians, who were grown too numerous to be marked out for slaughter without depopulating the towns and country, as it happened to Severus in the merciless massacre he made at Lyons. Maximin directed his malice against those who held any distinctive rank in the Church, not doubting but the people would be easily gained, when deprived of their pastors and teachers. The storm then chiefly fell upon the clergy. Pope Pontianus, and his successor Anterus, are in the list of those who suffered. St. Fabianus then succeeded to suffer in his turn.

The blood-thirsty emperor extended his cruelty likewise to his pagan subjects. They submitted not so tamely to his oppressive despotism as the Christians had done; the senate had ventured to throw out their discontents against the emperor and the army; the people caught the spirit of revolt; seditions broke out in Italy and Africa; the town of Aquileia openly rebelled. Maximin hastened from Germany to

reduce that important place again to his obedience. He besieged it in form ; the citizens made a vigorous resistance ; the troops at last, tired with the length and hardships of the siege, mutinied and slew the tyrants. They placed Gordianus, a youth, only sixteen years of age, upon the throne ; the senate servilely confirmed the election. With Maximin the persecution ceased in 240, after it had lasted three years.



SECTION IV.

Seventh Persecution under Decius.

(A. D. 253.) THE Church enjoyed the free exercise of religion during the two reigns of Gordianus and Philip. Philip gained the crown by imbruing his hands in the blood of his sovereign, the young Gordianus, and lost it again in the same murderous manner, by the hand of his son Decius. Philip is said by some to have been a Christian, but the fact appears not to be sufficiently authenticated. Decius, from the moment he mounted the throne, seemed fully bent upon the extirpation of Christianity from the empire. He directed an edict for that wicked purpose to all the provincial governors, who with no less eagerness than inhumanity concurred in the diabolical design. Various arts of extermination were devised and executed against the servants of God. Against the less fervent, every lascivious enticement was tried to seduce them first into vice, and then into apostacy. Lingerin but painful modes of death were practised upon the less robust, while every instrument of torture was exhibited to break and subdue the strong. Prisons, stripes,

fire, wild beasts, melted wax, boiling pitch, red hot pincers, racks, and iron hooks to tear the flesh from the bones were employed at once to torment and to kill. In Africa, in Italy, in Egypt, and the East, the persecution seems to have been most severely felt. The number of those, who generously expired for their faith on this occasion, exceeds all calculation, according to Nicephorus, the historian. The most distinguished names we meet with among the glorious sufferers are, Fabianus, the bishop of Rome, Alexander of Jerusalem, and Babylas of Antioch. At Smyrna, a holy priest, named Pionius, was nailed to a post and burnt alive. At Alexandria, many, in like manner, finished their course by fire.

Terrified at the sight of their tortured brethren, and diffident of their own courage, many fled from the towns and cities to hide themselves in the uninhabited deserts of Egypt, choosing rather to dwell with wild beasts than with more ferocious men. Among these was a young man, called Paul, who, preferring solitude to a noisy life, even when the persecution was over, became the patriarch of an eremitical tribe of Saints, and lived to a great age. Others of the episcopal order retired for a time from the field of danger, not through fear of suffering, but on the motive of charity, that they might be ready to administer spiritual aid and comfort to the distressed. Of this number were St. Denis, bishop of Alexandria, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, and St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage.

Others there were, even of the clergy, who had neither the prudence to fly, nor the resolution to stand the conflict. Many deplorable instances of human weakness occur in history during the time of this persecution. Of the many, who professed themselves Christians, all had not imbibed the spirit of their vocation, or had neglected to nourish it by

prayer and other good works. There was a visible decay of primitive fervor amongst them. To that degeneracy of zeal and piety, St. Cyprian attributes the dreadful scourge which then befel the Church.

The Church had the grief to see some of her priests and bishops yield in the day of trial, and renounce their religion. On others, the honor of suffering for the name of Jesus Christ had a very different effect. These acknowledged the hand of divine justice in chastising them for their past infidelities, they adored the infinite mercy of God in making them thus sensible of their duty by temporal chastisements: their faith was animated, they joyfully underwent a transient death in hope of an everlasting life. Decius had never ceased from persecuting the Church for two and twenty months, when it pleased Providence to cut him short in his career. The Goths, a barbarous nation beyond the northern bank of the Danube, having provoked his anger, he marched in person against them. Gallus, the General of his army, treacherously led him into a deep fen, where he perished with his son.

SECTION V.

Origen.

(A. D. 254.) AMONG the sufferers in the persecution of Decius, was the celebrated Origen, who had been thrown into a close prison, but found means of making his escape. Origen, for erudition and genius, one of the brightest ornaments of the third century, was born at Alexandria in 185. From his earliest youth, he manifested a natural propensity

to virtue and learning; these happy dispositions were carefully cultivated by his virtuous father Leonides, who suffered martyrdom for his religion under Severus. The father's estates being confiscated to the emperor's use, the son was reduced to a state of indigence. For an honest livelihood, he opened a grammar school in Alexandria, and the year after he undertook to instruct some catechumens in the principles of faith. Quick parts and study made him a great proficient in every branch of learning, in dialectics, in geometry, in arithmetic, in music, in rhetoric, in the different systems of philosophy, in the Hebrew language and knowledge of holy scripture. The success that attended his private school, moved his bishop Demetrius to appoint him President in the great catechetical school of Alexandria, though not above eighteen years of age at that time. This school had been formed about twenty years before, by one Pantenus, a holy man, who, from a Stoic philosopher, became a zealous propagator of the Christian faith. The design of its institution, was for the instruction of catechumens in the rudiments of religion. St. Pantenus spent ten years in that meritorious employ, then entering upon a more extensive field to preach the Gospel in Ethiopia, he was succeeded in the school by the renowned Clement of Alexandria, a venerable priest, universally esteemed for his eminent piety and polite learning. After this great man, Origen was appointed catechist; an important office, the duties of which were to teach theology, and to explain the holy scriptures. Besides this, he undertook to teach all the arts and sciences at the same time.

His extensive knowledge, the clear arrangement of his ideas, his presence of mind, and elegant flow of language attracted numbers to his school. It was no longer a school for catechumens only; philosophers and the literati of the

age, Christians and Gentiles crowded round him to profit by his lessons. Of his Pagan hearers, many embraced the truths of Christianity, the faithful were strengthened in their faith, of whom many sealed it with their blood: so that his school may be as justly styled the seminary of martyrs as of divines. He had some disagreeable disputes with his bishop, who approved not of all his proceedings. He made several excursions to Rome, into Palestine, Syria, Cappadocia, Achaia and Arabia, partly to improve himself in knowledge, and partly to instruct others, or to avoid the resentment of his bishop. The publication of his learned commentaries upon the Scripture, and his theological treatise against Celsus, acquired him an universal reputation.

This Celsus was an epicurean philosopher, who lived in the beginning of the second century, one of the most crafty and most subtle writers, that ever employed his pen against the Christian truths. He writes with all the refined fallacy that sophistry can devise, displays an air of positiveness to impose upon the illiterate, and manages his argument with all the advantages that study, wit, and fine raillery can give. Origen, in his reply, follows him step by step through all his windings, by clear and solid reasoning reduces every argument to its right principle, convicts him of falsehood in point of fact, sets in a true light the things which his adversary had stifled or disguised, and establishes the truth of the Christian religion by the evidence of facts and of its own history. In his commentaries upon the Scripture, he mentions several interesting points which mark the practice and state of the Church in those early times. He mentions infant baptism, as the proof of original sin, he mentions the celibacy of the clergy, whose fecundity, he says, was only spiritual, nor did they aspire to any other.

Origen has not been equally successful in his book *On Principles*, which he designed for an introduction to the study of theology. The opinions he here advances are so unfounded, so bold and singular, that they have been universally reprobated. Rufinus, famous for his friendship and quarrel with St. Jerom, has translated it from the Greek into Latin, and although he has retrenched all that appeared to him incompatible with the Church's doctrine concerning the Trinity, yet the fifth general Council, held at Constantinople in 553, found still enough to censure and condemn.

As the foundation on which a huge pile of errors is erected, Origen lays down this principle, That all punishment is medicinal. He supposes, that previous to the creation of matter, God created an innumerable multitude of spirits, equal with one another in merit and abilities; that most of them, by an abuse of their free will, fell into faults; that for the expiation of those faults they were condemned to animate various portions of matter, made on purpose, more refined or gross according to their different degrees of guilt; that some of them are confined in the planets and glowing stars of the firmament, and some in our terraqueous globe, as in a temporary prison; while others are shut up in the subtle substances of angels, others in the corruptible bodies of men, and others plunged into the transitory lake of hell fire; that after a fixed revolution of ages, their faults will be gradually purged away, and that Lucifer himself, with all his rebel associates, will at length recover the friendship of his Creator. Such are the extravagancies of a speculative imagination, which have tarnished the merit of Origen. That he acknowledged and repented of his errors we charitably hope. The bishops of Palestine treated him with honor, St. Pamphilus composed his apology, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus spoke his panegyric. He bore,

in fine, with great fortitude, imprisonment and tortures for the Catholic faith in the persecution of Decius. He died at Tyre in the year 254, which was the sixty-ninth of his age.

SECTION VI.

Internal troubles of the Church.

(A. D. 255.) AFTER the martyrdom of St. Fabius, the Roman See remained vacant for fifteen months on account of the persecution. Upon the death of Decius, the bishops and Roman clergy ventured to assemble in order to give a successor to St. Peter. They unanimously chose Cornelius, a man eminently qualified for the important charge. His election was in due form notified to the different churches, and approved by them. Internal peace and harmony might naturally be expected to be the result of it. But even in those turbulent times, when martyrdom seemed to be the inseparable appendage of the pontificate, human ambition could discover something in the mitre, which had the power at once to dazzle and attract. Novatus, a schismatical priest of Carthage, had raised a disturbance there against St. Cyprian, for re-admitting those to communion, who had fallen during the persecution. Being forced to fly from Africa, he came to Rome. Here he connected himself with one Novation, who had been irregularly ordained a priest, and was reputed one of the Roman clergy. This man affected a warm zeal for ecclesiastical discipline; his carriage had the appearance of virtue and austere morality. This was but a cloak to his hypocrisy. He aspired to the popedom. By the help of his African friend, he gained the

confidence of some unsuspecting Christians and formed a faction.

To mask his schismatical design, he made pitiful complaints of the decay of discipline and manners, condemned the practice of admitting apostate sinners to repentance, spread slanderous reports to asperse the character of the good Cornelius, disputed the legality of his election, and finally contrived to have himself clandestinely ordained bishop of Rome. The next step was to procure the approbation of the dispersed bishops. For this purpose, he drew up a plausible but false account of what had passed at Rome, imposed upon the credulity of some confessors, suffering for their faith in prison, and obtained their signatures. With this account, composed in the form of a letter, he sent deputies to the different Churches of Africa and Asia. St. Cyprian of Carthage, being previously apprised of the iniquitous transaction, refused to see the deputies. Other bishops, not so well informed, were inclined to give some credit to Novatian's narrative on account of the respectable names of those who had signed it. But still they had strong suspicions that all was not right, and therefore took time to make further inquiries before they returned an answer. After a full investigation of what had passed at Rome, the matter was no longer doubtful. Upon the clearest evidence, Novatian was found guilty, not only of schism, but of heresy. It was proved that he had drawn off a part of the flock from their lawful pastor, and had positively denied a power in the Church to absolve those who had fallen in the persecution, although sincerely penitent for having sinned. Sentence being pronounced against him, his credit and dignity sunk together. His deluded partisans confessed their error; upon their repentance, Cornelius received them back again into his communion. This short

schism, which was the first in Rome, induced St. Cyprian to write his treatise upon the Unity of the Church, in which he expressly asserts the supremacy of St. Peter above the other Apostles.

The death of Decius encouraged those bishops who had absconded, to show themselves again for the benefit of their respective flocks. Their first endeavor was to re-establish the divine service, which had been interrupted, and to repair the havoc made by the late persecution. Divers councils were held at Rome, at Antioch, and Carthage, in which Novatian was repeatedly condemned, many penitential canons were enacted, and wholesome regulations made to raise the fallen, and to console the penitent, that all might be healed, and none driven to perish by despair.

SECTION VII.

Decision of St. Stephen.

(A. D. 256.) GALLUS, the murderer and successor of Decius, in the beginning of his short reign, suffered the Church to breathe a little from the hard trials she had undergone: but raging pestilence, which spread desolation through the empire, furnished him with a pretext to renew the persecution. Blinded by superstition, he ordered sacrifices to be offered to the gods, that the pestilence might cease. Christians became the victims of that superstitious order. Pope Cornelius and his successor Lucius, were sacrificed to appease the wrath of fictitious deities. St. Cyprian's death was publicly called for by the heathen populace of Carthage. The persecution seems to have been

particularly violent at Rome, as we learn from one of Cornelius' letters to Lupicinus, bishop of Vienna in Gaul. In that letter, the holy Pontiff mentions that many had been crowned with martyrdom, and that they could no longer celebrate Mass in the known places of divine worship.

But a sudden revolution in the empire soon after changed the state of public affairs, and left the Church again quiet for a time. Gallus had no capacity to govern; the calamities attending his reign had rendered him very unpopular. The crown tottered on his head. Emilian, commander of the army of Hungary, had been proclaimed emperor by the Roman bands, and was upon his march to Rome. Thunderstruck at the news, Gallus ordered Valerian, who commanded in Gaul, to hasten with his legions to Italy. Emilian, by forced marches, got the start of them. Gallus had none but his Italian army to rely on. The Italians, seeing how unequal they were to stand the contest, murdered Gallus and joined Emilian. In that situation of affairs, arrived Valerian with his legions. Valerian was beloved by his army, and had talents to command; Emilian, on the other hand, had nothing to recommend him to popular favor or esteem. Unqualified to manage a vast and disconcerted empire, he was basely assassinated by the very troops, who a month before had vested him with the purple. Valerian quietly mounted the throne, if not a friend, at least no enemy to the Christian religion. During the first three years of his reign, the Church experienced no external violence. The bishops embraced that opportunity to discuss and regulate such points of doctrine and discipline, as the present state of things seemed to require.

About fifty years before that period, Agrippinus, a predecessor of St. Cyprian in the See of Carthage, had begun the practice of rebaptizing those who had received baptism

from a heretic. The practice passed for some time unnoticed. At length St. Cyprian, on being consulted upon the subject by some bishops of Numidia, took the matter into serious consideration, and by an error in judgment, contended that baptism conferred by a heretic was certainly null. The personal qualifications of St. Cyprian, his learning, his eloquence, his extensive charity, his zeal, his strenuous exertions in the cause of God, added to the dignity of his See, gave him great weight in the decision of ecclesiastical questions. In this question, however, his opinion was set aside; for it was not consistent with truth. St. Cyprian grounded his argument on this false principle, That no man can receive the holy Ghost through the hands of a man, who does not possess the holy Ghost in his own soul. This principle, were it true, would equally militate against any minister who confers baptism in a state of mortal sin, and would consequently render the validity of baptism ever doubtful and uncertain. This the venerable prelate in the hurry of his argument did not perceive.

He seems moreover to have forgotten, that in baptism as well as in other sacraments, Christ is the principal, although invisible minister, and that it is not through the merits or the faith of man, but through the merits of Christ, that sin is remitted, and the holy Ghost received in the souls of the faithful. Hence the learned St. Austin expressly says,* Whether it be Peter or Judas, whether it be Paul or any other man of inferior merit, who applies the matter and form of baptism, it is Christ who baptizes: and if it were not so, there would be more baptisms than one, contrary to the doctrine of St. Paul.† There would be one baptism of a superior value, and another baptism of inferior value,

* Tract. 6. in Joann.

† Eph. c. iv. v. 5.

according to the superior or inferior merit of him who administers the sacrament.

St. Cyprian either did not see the force of this argument, or thought it not conclusive. For he tenaciously adhered to his own opinion, being undoubtedly persuaded of its truth. Under that persuasion he convened three national councils, in the last of which no less than seventy-two African bishops were present, who subscribed to that opinion. That opinion was likewise adopted by fifty oriental bishops with St. Firmilian of Cæsarea in Cappadocia at their head. Backed by this respectable authority, the bishop of Carthage sent his opinion to Rome for the approbation of the Apostolic See. St. Stephen had lately succeeded Lucius in the Pontificate, a prelate not less versed in the knowledge, than steady in the practice of all Apostolical doctrine. To the opinion of St. Cyprian and his African prelates, he definitively replied by this concise and positive decree: "Let no innovation be introduced; but let that be observed, which is handed down to us by tradition." The authority of this decree silenced the opposite party, and put an end to the controversy, as it seems, since we hear no more of it after that decision. Whether St. Cyprian publicly retracted his error or not, we have no historical account. But his piety, his humility, his charity, his professed respect for the primacy of St. Peter's chair, which, he calls the origin of sacerdotal unity, give us every reason to suppose with St. Austin, that he humbly acquiesced in the decision. However prepossessed he was in favor of the practice of his own church, and however harsh may appear some expressions that escaped him in the warmth of his imagination, he candidly declares in his letter to Jubaianus, that he meant nothing contrary to unity or to charity, both which he sincerely wished to preserve inviolate. He falsely imagined

it to be a mere question of local discipline, which he thought himself at liberty to maintain. So thought the other supporters of that opinion. From the circumstances attending this dispute, it is evinced that a whole national council of Bishops, even with a St. Cyprian at its head, is liable to err without the support of that rock on which Christ has built his Church.

SECTION VIII.

Eighth Persecution under Valerian.

(A. D. 257.) THE emperor Valerian had hitherto given no disturbance to the Christians; he even seemed to have a friendship for them. But, unfortunately for the empire, Valerian had a favorite who gained an entire ascendancy over him, and directed him in all his plans and enterprises. He was called Macrinus, a sworn enemy to Christians and their religion. At the instigation of this wicked parasite, he divested himself of his former kindness towards the Christians, whom he now devoted to utter extirpation, as a requisite condition to render the gods propitious to his arms, in an expedition he was meditating against the Persians. Under this impression he published an angry edict, which procured the crown of martyrdom to thousands. Among the first who suffered, were St. Stephen at Rome, and St. Cyprian at Carthage. St. Cyprian's death was followed by the sufferings of many others, both of the clergy and laity. Some were cut off at one stroke, others went through a variety of shocking torments before they received their crown; many were condemned to linger out life in the

copper mines of Numidia and Mauritania, where they had hunger and thirst, heat and cold, hard labor, and the want of every human comfort to undergo. Spain, Gaul, and Egypt had their martyrs likewise in this persecution.

The See of Alexandria was at that time held by St. Denis, whose merits and authority were very great in the Church of God. This learned prelate had employed his pen in refuting the heresies of Sabellius and Paul of Samosata, so called from the town of his birth in Syria. Sabellius, born in Libya, made no distinction of persons in the Trinity, so that in his system, the Father and Holy Ghost suffered equally with the Son. Paul of Samosata, a man without virtue or learning, had by his cunning crept into the See of Antioch; he denied the existence of Jesus Christ before his conception in the womb of Mary. The Millennial error, which was grounded on an expression in the Revelations* misunderstood, that Christ was to reign on earth, with his elect, a thousand years before the general resurrection, had also begun to spread in Egypt. This error had been first devised by Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, in Syria, a good and holy man, but possessed of more credulity than science. St. Denis stopped the progress of this doctrine by his private discourse, and by two judicious dissertations upon the divine promises. He had likewise been very active and successful in effecting a reconciliation between St. Stephen and the oriental bishops, who had espoused the African error respecting baptism.

Such exertions of christian zeal gave offence to Emilian, the governor of Egypt. By his order, the holy bishop was arrested and condemned to a painful banishment amidst the burning sands of Libya. Among many other illustrious

* C. xx, v. 4, 6.

names of those who shed their blood for Christ in this persecution, we meet with Fructuosus, bishop of Tarragon in Spain, burnt alive with his deacons; we meet with Saturninus, the first bishop of Toulouse in Gaul, torn to pieces by a wild bull; we likewise meet with Denis, the first bishop of Paris, beheaded with Rusticus and Eleutherius.

But all these barbarous murders did not satiate the tyrant's thirst after Christian blood. From the plains of Persia, and almost in the sight of a powerful enemy, whom he had to cope with, Valerian, by the advice of his favorite, Macrinus, as it is thought, dictated a letter to the Roman Senate, with peremptory orders, that all bishops, priests and deacons, should be taken up and put to death; that all Christian senators, knights and nobles, should be also seized, degraded and executed, unless they renounced Christ; women likewise, especially those of superior rank, were included in this tyrannical decree. Sixtus II., who had been lately raised to the Pontificate after the martyrdom of St. Stephen, was immediately arrested in virtue of an order from the governor of Rome, and condemned to be beheaded. The guards led him on towards the place of execution; Lawrence, his arch-deacon, followed with tears in his eyes and thus addressed him: "Holy Father, whither are you hastening without your deacon? You never used to offer sacrifice without your minister. Why do you leave me? Why am I not to attend you now? In what have I displeased you? Try me and see whether you made an improper choice, when you conferred upon me the office of distributing the sacred Body and Blood of our Lord?" In this manner did the holy deacon express the strong desire he had of sharing in his bishop's sufferings. "Grieve not, my son," replied the Pontiff, "I do not leave you; I go but a short time before you; three days hence you will follow.

To me, already sinking under the weight of years, a light trial is decreed ; but for you, in the bloom of youth, a more arduous triumph is reserved."

SECTION IX.

Martyrdom of St. Lawrence.

(A. D. 258.) LAWRENCE was arrested upon the spot, and conducted before the governor, who addressed him in the following terms: "You Christians, in general, tax us with cruelty, and often complain of the torments we inflict upon you. Nothing of that kind is here intended. I threaten not, I only ask, and ask no more than what you can safely grant without renouncing your religion. I am told, that in your religious rites your priests offer the sacrifice in gold, and receive the sacred blood in silver cups, and that in your nocturnal sacrifices, you have wax lights fixed in candlesticks of gold. I am likewise told, that according to the principles of your religion you must give to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. Bring to light these hidden treasures, which Cæsar wants for the payment of his troops. Your God, I apprehend, brought neither gold nor silver with him into the world. His riches lay in words only. Give us then the money, and be ye rich in words." To this insulting speech, Lawrence modestly replied: "Our Church, indeed, is rich; it possesses valuable treasures, such as the emperor cannot show. Allow me but a little time to arrange and set them properly in order, and I will bring you the most precious of them." The governor, satisfied with this

answer, fancied himself already possessed of vast hidden wealth, and granted the deacon three days to produce it.

Lawrence employed the whole time in seeking out the blind, the decrepit, the infirm, the poor orphans, widows and virgins, to whom he distributed all that remained in the sacred treasury of the church. On the third day he drew up this indigent multitude in rows before the church, and invited the governor to come and see them. "Behold," says the holy deacon to him, "behold the treasures, which I promised to produce. These, in the eyes of God, are more precious than gold and silver, which you so wickedly covet, and which, by their hands, is already conveyed into the treasury of heaven." The governor, thinking himself insulted, cried out in a transport of rage: Dost thou thus mock me? Is it thus, that the axes and the fascces, the sacred ensigns of Roman power, are set at nought? I know it is thy wish to die: such is thy madness. Die thou shalt, but not so speedily as thou imaginest. Thou shalt die by inches! Upon this, a flat iron grate, cross-set with bars, like a gridiron, was brought forth. The tyrant ordered the holy deacon to be tied down at full length upon it, and then set over a quantity of glowing coals, that he might enjoy the savage satisfaction of seeing him expire by slow degrees. The martyr lay composed, as on a bed of roses, amidst a surrounding crowd of spectators, without showing the least sign of suffering, or uttering a single word of complaint. His countenance shone with a heavenly serenity, and the smoke of his broiling limbs was like an odoriferous perfume. While the material fire slowly consumed his body, his soul more warmly glowed with the pure flames of divine love, which rendered his torments either imperceptible or pleasant to him. When he had lain for some time on one side, he said to the judge; "My body

may be now turned, this side is broiled enough." The executioners then turned him by the judge's order. He lay not long, when feeling the fire had now penetrated to the vital parts, he said again: "It is done enough; you now may turn and eat." He continued to pour forth his most fervent prayers for the conversion of the Roman people, till lifting up his eyes to heaven, he placidly resigned his soul into the hands of his creator.

Divine justice was not slow to avenge these inhuman cruelties, by retaliating on the author of them. The barbarity of one tyrant became an instrument, in the hand of God, to punish the barbarity of another. The bad success that attended the Roman arms in Persia, made Valerian wish for peace. Saporess, the Persian monarch, had secret intelligence of it, and dissembling his design, caused a report to spread through the camp, that he was inclined for peace, and wished to have a personal interview with the Roman emperor. Valerian gave into the snare. The terms and place of parley were agreed on. They met; the Persian had taken his measures; the Roman believing him to be sincere, was off his guard, and indiscreetly put himself into his adversary's power. Before he had time to reflect, he was surprised to find himself a prisoner. This stroke of consummate perfidy put an end to the war. For the emperor's release immense sums were offered and refused. Proud revenge, not money, was the object of Saporess. Whenever he chose to ride abroad, he had his imperial captive brought forth like a slave; then making him bend his back, used him as a leaping stock to mount his horse. After he had treated him in this disgraceful manner for ten years, he at last ordered him to be flayed alive, and rubbed over with salt. He had his skin dyed red, and hung up in one of the public temples, as a trophy of Persian greatness over imperial Rome.

SECTION X.

Ninth Persecution under Aurelian.

(A. D. 274.) By Valerian's captivity, the supreme power devolved upon Gallienus, his son and colleague. This dissolute prince, too indolent to act, and too unskilful to govern, gave his whole time to amusements, which he would not suffer to be interrupted by any concerns of state. The empire thereby became a prey to internal factions, while foreign enemies ravaged its frontiers with impunity. He, however, restored peace to the Church, by an imperial edict, commanding no more Christian blood to be spilt, which, for the last three years, had flowed in great abundance. The Church, notwithstanding had rather gained than lost by the trials she underwent; her virtues shone forth with brighter lustre, like gold from the furnace: by the constancy of her martyrs, and the accession of new converts, she wonderfully increased and multiplied. The good offices, every where exhibited by Christians to their afflicted neighbors and Pagan persecutors, wrought a surprising change in the minds of all considerate and sober men. The dreadful pestilence, which had broken out some years before, continued still to rage in many cities of the empire; the fear of infection left thousands of the sick destitute of help, even from their nearest friends and relations, who, under that apprehension, shunned and neglected them. Their neglect was supplied by the active charity of Christians, even at the hazard of their own lives. Such disinterested and heroic virtues the heathens had never seen; they admired and respected what they could not yet understand. They concluded that inspired must be the doctrine, and divine the institution of a religion which could infuse such

sentiments, and prescribe such deeds of virtue to its followers. Drawn by such example, they desired to know and adopt its principles. The whole city of Neocesarea, in Pontus, became Christian at once.

Gallienus, by his indolence and lust, had rendered himself contemptible in the eyes of all his subjects. The dagger put an end to his inglorious reign: the army and senate proclaimed Claudius emperor, a man well skilled in politics and war. He reigned not quite three years; Aurelian succeeded, who, from an obscure private in the army, rose by his military talents to the imperial throne. The beginning of his reign seemed to portend rather favor than oppression to the Church. A provincial council of bishops, convened together at Antioch, had pronounced the sentence of deposition and excommunication upon Paul of Samosata, the heretical bishop of that See, for denying the divinity of Christ. The censure wrought no change either in the sentiments or irregular conduct of Paul: he put himself under the protection of Zenobia, and thereby set the bishops and their censures at defiance. Queen Zenobia, no less renowned for her literary than for her military talents, was at that time mistress of the east, and kept her court at Palmyra, a magnificent city in Syria, bordering on the desert of Arabia. She had been educated in the Jewish religion, and had applied to Paul of Samosata for instruction in the Christian religion. Aurelian declared war against her, laid siege to her capital, which he took, and carried her away to grace his triumphal entry into Rome. The oriental bishops, being then no longer under her control, sent an address to Aurelian, praying that the canonical sentence, passed some years before against Paul, the arch-heretic, might be put in execution, to which he readily consented.

But a different character soon showed, that the virtues of justice and humanity formed not the character of Aurelian. He was by nature both avaricious and cruel; nor was he possessed of any one principle that could correct the defects which a soldier's education had strengthened in him. To please the senate and Roman people, he published a sanguinary edict against the Christians, but lived not long enough to see it put in execution. The hand of an assassin deprived him of life, as he was upon his march with a powerful army to revenge the insult which Saporess had thrown upon the Romans in his treatment of Valerian. The unexpected death of Aurelian prevented the effusion of much Christian blood. Yet in several places a savage eagerness, both in the magistrates and people, to second the late emperor's inclinations, which coincided with their own, made many martyrs, at the head of whom was pope Felix. Felix had succeeded St. Denis, the successor of Sixtus II., and he himself was succeeded by St. Eutychianus.

After Aurelian's death, the imperial sceptre, within the space of ten years, passed through the hands of Tacitus, Probus, Carus, and Carinus, when the imperious voice of the army placed it in the hands of Dioclesian, who held it twenty years. In Dioclesian, the Church experienced a more sanguinary tyrant than in any of his predecessors. His intention and endeavor were nothing less than to extirpate, if possible, the whole Christian race, and to obliterate the very name. The attempt, instead of lessening, served to confirm and manifest the truths of that religion, which it meant to destroy. The concurrent testimony of so many martyrs, in so many different countries, professing the same doctrines, and generously dying in their defence, exhibits so strong and so palpable a proof of their being true, that

every effort to cast discredit on them must be deemed no less rash than impious.

The doctrines, for which those champions of Christianity so nobly shed their blood, are no other than what the Catholic Church continues to believe and teach at this day. The adorable sacrifice of the Mass, the real presence of Christ's body and blood in the holy Eucharist, confession and forgiveness of sins by the priest's absolution in the sacrament of penance, prayers, in fine, and oblations for the faithful departed, then were, as they still are, the professed doctrines of Christ's Church. This is a fact so clearly evinced by the practice, and so fully attested by the writers of that age, by a Clement of Alexandria, by an Irenæus, by a Tertullian, by an Origen, by a St. Cyprian, that the centurions of Magdeburg admit it beyond a doubt. What sensations those facts may raise in the mind of a thinking Christian, who discards from his creed those primitive doctrines, since called by Reformers, in these latter days, the errors of Popery, I will not venture to say. But to a Catholic reader, solid must be the satisfaction to find that his religion, and the religion of the primitive Christians, is perfectly one and the same, in every article of divine faith.

CENTURY IV.

SECTION I.

Tenth Persecution under Dioclesian.

(A. D. 302.) By a singular caprice of fortune, if the expression may be allowed, Dioclesian crept from an obscure corner of Dalmatia to the supreme power of Rome: Bold and enterprising by nature, he became by habit an experienced officer, and a good politician. At his accession to the throne in 284, the empire was miserably distracted by various factions. To stifle these factions and to secure his own interest in the West, he shared his power with Maximinian, a rough and daring warrior, whom he declared his colleague. These two having ruled the empire with equal authority for about nine years, judged it expedient for the public good to associate to themselves two other colleagues, of an inferior rank, with the title of Cæsars. They agreed, that each of them should choose his man. Dioclesian chose Galerius, an obscure native of Dacia, one of the most violent and most profligate of men. Maximinian chose Constantius Chlorus, a prince by descent, of whom no vice, but many good qualities are recorded. He was nephew to Claudius II., and lineally descended from Vespasian. Aurelian had employed him in Great Britain, where he married Helen, the daughter of Coel, a leading man of that country, and by her had a son, the renowned Constantine, born at Colchester, as Baronius and all our English writers unanimously agree. At his association in the empire there was an article agreed on between him and

his colleagues, that he should divorce Helen, and marry Theodora, the daughter-in-law of Maximinian.

These four sovereigns, having the whole power in their own hands, parcelled out the empire into four great divisions, assigning to each one his own territory, where he might exercise a supreme independent authority, without jealousy and without confusion of interests. The chief motive for establishing this political system was to secure the internal peace of the empire, and to have a standing force always ready to act with authority against the invasions of a foreign enemy.

The Church had enjoyed a general tranquility for upwards of twenty years, during which time the number of converts became so great that the churches were too small to contain them. Christians were then allowed to practise their religion without restraint; they were deemed good subjects; many of them were advanced to posts of emolument and trust. The consequence of this indulgence was a decay of piety. The faithful then began to have temporal pursuits in view, they grew remiss in their devotions to God, and unfaithful in the duties of religion. God was displeased; his justice permitted a new persecution to rise at once to chastise the infidelities and to rouse the faith of his people. On the part of the ruling powers the rage of persecution sprung from a thirst of plunder, from superstition, and a ferocity of temper, that delighted in human blood.

During the winter of 302, that Dioclesian passed at Nicomedia, Galerius used all his influence to persuade him into some violent measures against the Christians. Dioclesian rejected his advice upon political motives, till the soothsayers overruled his politics by the force of superstition, declaring that the empire could never flourish, as long as

the impious, meaning the Christians, were suffered to exist. The deluded emperor weakly yielded, and published an edict for the total extirpation of the Christian religion. His authority did not absolutely extend beyond the limits of his own division in the empire. But deeds of cruelty and bloodshed suited the genius of Maximinian and Galerius, and they readily adopted the exterminating system. The devastation committed by them in their respective governments was most deplorable. The storm first began at Nicomedia, and from thence spreading far and wide, says Lactantius, deluged the earth with blood from the east to the remotest corners of the west. Less horrible, indeed, were its effects in Gaul and Great Britain, which had fallen to the share of the humane Constantius. But Constantius, with all his humanity, supported by supreme authority, could not restrain the more superstitious magistrates, whose inclination led them to execute the edict of Dioclesian. Hence, in Great Britain, we find a St. Alban, and St. Augulus, bishop of London, dying for their faith; in Gaul a St. Quintin, a Victor, a Mauritius, with the whole Theban legion, barbarously sacrificed to gratify an inferior officer of state.

The persecution raged with greatest violence in the east. There the passions of savage infidels were not only let loose, but encouraged by authority to plunder, to oppress, to torture and destroy their harmless neighbors. By soldiers, and the executioners of public justice, Christians were driven in crowds to be slaughtered; men, women, and children were promiscuously massacred or burnt by hundreds. Their property, their houses, their persons were exposed to every outrage, that a pagan populace was inclined to commit. In Phrygia, a whole town with its inhabitants was consumed by fire, without so much as a

single Christian being suffered to escape. In Mesopotamia, in Syria, in Pontus, in Egypt, various and exquisite were the torments which the martyrs underwent. Some were stript naked, stuck by one leg upon a fork, and there left to expire by degrees, or to be pecked to death by birds of prey: some had their flesh scraped from the bone with broken pots, and boiling lead poured into their gaping wounds: others were slashed with knives from head to foot, rubbed over with pepper and salt, laid upon gridirons, and consumed by a slow fire.

The malicious ingenuity of man seemed to delight in inventing new tortures, the very sight of which was enough to shock the most hardy barbarian. But Almighty God, who never abandons those who humbly put their trust in him, visibly supported his servants in those terrible conflicts, and proportioned his graces to the severity of their trials. The tyrant's rage was not yet satiated, and that famine might destroy whom the instruments of torture could not reach, it was severely forbidden to sell or furnish the necessities of life to any one, who should not perform some idolatrous act, before he received what he wanted. The churches and places of divine worship were every where pulled down, the sacred volumes burnt, and every mark of Christianity effaced. Then it was, that numberless Christians fled the light of day, and buried themselves alive in hollow caverns, called the Catacombs. Then it also was, that thousands retired into inhospitable deserts, deeming 'it more safe to dwell with wild beasts, than with savage men. With no other subsistence than what a barren wilderness might afford, they devoted themselves to the religious exercises of a contemplative life, since they could no longer move in the sphere of civil society, without the risk of being dragged to prison or the rack, any hour of the day.

SECTION II.

Abdication of Dioclesian and Maximinian.

(A. D. 305.) **DIOCLESIAN** had carried on the persecution for three years with unremitting cruelty against the Christians, but began now to despair of being ever able to effect their destruction. Religion rose with fresh vigor over all his wicked efforts to depress it. Disappointment and vexation, to see his projects thus foiled, worked so strongly upon his mind, already weakened by infirmity and age, that he is said to have taken thereupon the desperate resolution of abdicating the crown. However that may be, he soon after found himself compelled to do it, whether he would or not. Galerius was returned from the Persian war, crowned with laurels, and followed by a victorious army, ready to execute whatever he should command. He claimed nothing less than the absolute disposal of the whole Roman empire as due to his services. Maximinian had been already bullied into a consent to the victor's insolent demands. Towards the end of the year 304, Galerius repaired to Nicomedia. There, partly by argument, and partly by threats, he compelled the wretched Dioclesian, with tears in his eyes, to come into all his measures. On the first day of May, 305, the degraded Dioclesian was conducted from the city of Nicomedia to a neighboring eminence, where, in the presence of his state officers, his guards, and a vast multitude of spectators, he publicly divested himself of his imperial robes, of his crown and sceptre, and returned to a private station. Maximinian reluctantly submitted at Milan to the same painful ceremony about the same time.

Galerius had now attained the summit of his ambition. Being vested with the purple, he likewise wished to be solely

vested with the power which that elevated station gave, and therefore exerted all his influence to have such colleagues associated with him, as would lay him under no control. The common train of politics seemed to require that Constantius Chlorus, who, during these transactions, was quietly enjoying himself in Great Britain, should succeed Maximinian. But Galerius strongly objected, and proposed his friend Licinius, whose dispositions he knew to be quite suitable with his own, seeing, however, on one hand, that some confusion was likely to ensue, should he persist in his opposition, and considering on the other, that Constantius, in a declining state of health, could not long survive, silently consented to his promotion. The next important step was to create two new Cæsars, to which Maxentius, the son of Maximinian, and Constantine, the son of Constantius, had the fairest pretensions. Galerius rejected them both, the first for his pride, the latter for his good qualities; his firm resolution was to admit no associate whom he could not govern, or who was not so viciously inclined as himself. He nominated Severus, a drunken dancer, for one, and Maximin, his own nephew, a mere barbarian in disposition and manners, for the other Cæsar. To this dignified savage he committed the government of the east, where he carried on a most bloody persecution against the Christians.

Galerius, having in this manner made himself absolute master of the empire, took every measure that human policy suggested to remain so. For he was still under some apprehension, lest Constantius might be a troublesome colleague, and a check to his projects. He moreover saw by what passed at Dioclesian's abdication, that Constantine, the son of Constantius, was the people's favorite, and that much dissatisfaction had been expressed at his not being created one of the Cæsars. He therefore resolved to make the young

prince an honorable prisoner in his own palace, and to keep him as a hostage for his father's conduct.

Constantius, in the interim, declined apace, and earnestly wishing to see his son before he died, frequently pressed Galerius by letter to let the prince pass over to Great Britain, that they might take their last farewell of each other. The suspicious emperor always alledged some excuse not to let him go, till one evening, being in conversation with the prince upon that subject, he was warmly solicited by him for his consent, and the reasonableness of a dying father's request was so strongly urged, that he at last consented. Constantine gave immediate orders for his journey, and as soon as the old emperor was safe in bed, set off with the utmost speed, wisely judging that the leave he had obtained in the evening, might be recalled next morning. He travelled day and night not to be overtaken, and made no stop till he got to York, where he found his father reduced to the last degree of weakness. With the tenderest emotions of mutual affection they embraced each other. Constantius lost no time in settling up his private concerns, recommended his son to the loyalty of his troops, appointed him his successor in the empire, and died soon after, on the twenty-fifth of July, 306. Eusebius tells us that he professed his belief in one only God; but the grace of baptism, we fear, he never received.

SECTION III.

Triumph of Constantine.

(A. D. 312.) **CONSTANTINE**, by birth a Briton, the legitimate son of Constantius and St. Helen, had completed the thirty-third year of his age; a prince of superior talents, graceful in his person, irreproachable in his manners, brave, active, indefatigable in his pursuits, capable, in fine, of planning and executing the most arduous enterprises. Being taken at an early age by Dioclesian from his father's tuition, he spent the youthful part of his life in a heathen court without imbibing its vices. Destined by Providence to be the protector of God's chosen people, he was educated like another Moses, within the palace of a tyrant, who with a ferocity more bloody than that of Pharaoh, thought to exterminate the belief and worship of one God.

Constantine had many difficulties to surmount, many battles to fight, and powerful competitors to subdue, before he could enter into peaceable possession of the imperial crown. Galerius considered him as an enemy to all his projects. He knew the injury he had done him by snatching from his hand the purple to bestow it upon Maximin, and therefore dreaded his resentment. He would have been glad to exclude him from all share in the government, but seeing the favor he was in, both with the people and army, he durst not do it. He consented to let him take the title of Cæsar with the authority annexed, but would not admit him as a colleague upon the same level with himself. Old Maximinian was still alive, watching an opportunity to resume the purple which he had quitted with reluctance. His son Maxentius declared himself a competitor for the crown of Severus. Licinius had the promise and support of Galerius

to make him his associate in the imperial throne. In each of these Constantine had a determined enemy to contend with. Fortunately for him they were divided among themselves, and their divisions opened for him the way to conquest, whilst they plunged the empire into a civil war.

Constantine, having performed the sad duties to his father Constantius at York, passed over into Gaul, where a gallant army was awaiting his commands. His amiable character had gained him the hearts of all to whom the despotic rod of tyranny was become insupportable. The people and the army proclaimed him emperor with one accord, and heartily devoted themselves to his service. Maxentius, the professed rival of Severus, took upon himself the title of Augustus, and was joined by his father Maximinian, who, on that occasion eagerly grasped the sceptre again, which the violence of Galerius had wrested from his hand. By the united forces of these two emperors, Severus was attacked, defeated, and deprived both of his crown and life. Galerius upon this came forward in favor of Licinius, whom he declared his imperial colleague, and in person led his army into Italy, with the hope of being able to cut off Maximinian. But his troops were not steady, nor to be relied on. He soon found it necessary to consult his own safety, and to march back to Nicomedia as quick as he could.

Maximinian then joined Constantine, and offered to acknowledge him for his colleague, and proclaim him emperor, on condition that he married his daughter Fausta. Constantine was already married to Minervina, by whom he had a son, named Crispus, but whom, on political motives, he then consented to divorce. The imperial law warranted such divorces, and Constantine at that time was no Christian. However advantageous to his interest the connection might

then be, it turned out most unfortunate and disgraceful in the end. Fausta proved a fire-brand in his family.

Ambition is ever restless; it looks constantly forward to what it has not, and is never satisfied with what it has. Maximinian grew jealous of his son Maxentius, and sought to depose him: not succeeding in his plan, and finding his own life to be in danger, he fled for refuge into Gaul. There he began to raise sedition against Constantine, his son-in-law. Constantine immediately marched against him, and took him prisoner, spared his life, and set him free. But finding him soon after active in fomenting new commotions, and even guilty of an attempt upon his life, he caused him to be strangled in the year 308. Galerius, struck like Antiochus by the avenging hand of divine justice in punishment of his cruelties against the Christians, followed him not long after. Pain extorted from the humbled persecutor a confession of his guilt; he acknowledged the justice of an offended God, and to appease his anger, published an edict at Sardis in favor of Christianity. Then were the prisons opened, the illustrious confessors set free, and peace restored to a large portion of the Christian Church. But Galerius still continued to languish in exquisite torment for a whole year, when consumed by worms and putrefaction, he died a wretched death in 311.

Upon the death of Galerius, Maximin, the savage tyrant of Egypt, assumed the title of emperor, and in opposition to Licinius, whose promotion he had ever beheld with a jealous eye, claimed a sovereign power over all Asia: and that he might be the better able to make good his claim, he entered into a strict alliance with Maxentius, the sovereign of Italy and Rome. This Asiatic alliance swelled the presumption of Maxentius, who now fancied himself sufficiently strong to subdue the west to his obedience. With this view he

declared war against Constantine, under the specious pretence of revenging his father's death. Constantine, like an able general, judged it better to prevent than to wait his enemy's attack: he hastened the march of his army from Gaul, penetrated into the very heart of Italy, and advanced as far as the bridge Milvius, now called Ponte Mole, within two miles of Rome. There he pitched his camp, and there, although inferior to his antagonist in the number of his troops, he resolved to come to a decisive action at once. What confirmed him in this resolution was a wonderful phenomenon, of which his whole army, as well as himself, had been ocular witnesses upon the march. The fact is circumstantially related* by Eusebius, as he heard it from Constantine himself. Having passed the Alps, and reached the plains of Italy, behold, as he was marching on a little after mid-day, at the head of his troops, a luminous Cross appeared upon the sky above the sun, and upon the Cross a legend expressing victory, was distinctly seen by all, written in Greek characters, *In this be thou conqueror*. To commemorate the fact, as well as to show his gratitude for so signal a mark of divine goodness towards him, Constantine ordered an exact representation of the Cross as it appeared in the sky, to be made and blazoned in the imperial banner. This was the famous LABARUM, which fifty chosen men were appointed to carry by turns before the emperor whenever he went to battle.

Constantine was encamped, as we have said, near the bridge Milvius, upon the Tiber: Maxentius, with the united forces of three armies, composed of veteran soldiers, and esteemed the best in the whole empire, advanced with full confidence of victory to attack him. Both armies met in the Quintian fields to decide, by the force of arms, who

* Vita. Cons.

should be master of Rome and of the empire. The battle was long and obstinate. Maxentius at last gave way, and in the general rout, pressing forward to save himself over a temporary bridge at some distance, fell into the Tiber and was drowned. This memorable victory, gained on the twenty-seventh of October, 312, put Constantine in possession of the west; Rome joyfully opened her gates to him on the same day, and the senate, four years after, erected in his honor a triumphal arch, which is still to be seen at the head of the Appian way.

SECTION IV.

Triumph of Religion.

(A. D. 313.) CONSTANTINE, after a short stay in Rome, repaired to Milan. There he met Licinius, with whom he had made an alliance against Maximin, and to whom he gave his sister Constantia in marriage. Naturally humane, and an enemy to persecution, he proposed to Licinius that no molestation or violence in future should be offered to any Roman subject on account of religion, and that they should both join in an imperial edict for that purpose. Licinius had too much at stake not to consent to the proposal; interest, not inclination, determined him to comply, as his subsequent conduct manifestly showed. The edict was then published, by which all penal restraints respecting religion were removed, and full liberty allowed for every one to profess and exercise that form of religious worship he should think proper to adopt. This indulgence gave offence to Maximin, the tyrant of the East. Implacable in his hatred

against the Christian name, and jealous of Licinius' growing power, declared war, and with a powerful army invaded Thrace. Licinius, with a strong force, attacked and routed him. The vanquished tyrant fled for safety into Asia, where, being vigorously pursued and in danger of falling into his enemy's hands, he chose to put an end to his own existence by poison. He survived the dose for four days, during which time he suffered exquisite tortures, acknowledged the scourge of divine vengeance, and expired in despair. Thus, by the disposition of an all-ruling Providence, the tyrants of the earth were cut off one after another, and the whole empire placed under the beneficent sway of Constantine the Great. It does not appear that Constantine had at that time declared himself a candidate for the Christian religion, though he undoubtedly was its avowed friend and protector.

Christianity had hitherto experienced every opposition that Jews, Philosophers, and Gentiles had been able to raise for near three hundred years against it. The Jews were their first aggressors; they thought to stifle it in its infancy. Their obstinate attachment to carnal forms and ceremonies, which were either peculiar to the Hebrew nation, or were merely figurative of a better hope, blinded their understanding, and strangely warped their reason against the spiritual doctrines and divinity of Jesus Christ. The subversion of Jerusalem and the utter ruin of their country was at once the punishment of their incredulity, and a lasting mark of their impotent attempts against the designs of God. Proud philosophy then observed its progress through Greece and Asia Minor, and resolved to check it. Stoics, Epicureans, and Peripatetics, with Celsus and Porphyry at their head, mustered up all the force that sophistry and delusive eloquence could supply to bear down

a religion, which denounced extirpation to the old pagan worship, and banishment to the gods themselves; from the whole Roman empire. The Gentiles grew enraged to see their idols insulted, their temples abandoned, and their altars overturned. Tyrants drew the sword of persecution, and set to work their engines of death and torture, to intimidate, to torment and destroy. Thousands of martyrs bled, and thousands rose up in their stead to attest and seal with their blood the same revealed truths. Nero, Domitian, Severus, Decius, Valerian, Dioclesian, and his sanguinary colleagues, armed the empire in order to exterminate the followers of Christ the crucified; they raved in vain, they ignobly perished in their own conceits, their memory is held in execration, while the honored victims of their tyranny shall triumph in the heavenly mansions for evermore.

Rome had for ages been the receptacle of every heathenish superstition, which her generals had gleaned from the conquered provinces; under the protection of Constantine, she now became the seat and centre of the one, true, holy, Catholic and apostolical religion. That enlightened emperor, though convinced of the absurdity of idolatry, left his subjects free in their choice of religion; he employed no other than mild methods to gain the hearts of the Pagans. Paganism had long maintained its sway by holding out to sensual man every tempting charm to excite and gratify his passions, sanctioned by the example of those fancied deities who were the idols of his adoration. To break the force of prejudice, which time and custom had established, Constantine wisely judged that compulsive measures would not do: he believed that to overthrow the system of error, nothing more was requisite than to grant protection to the true religion, and let the wisdom of her doctrine and the purity of

her moral precepts appear in open view. He began by remedying the evils, which his predecessors had occasioned by their edicts: he recalled the exiles, and restored to the Christians their places of religious worship, which he decorated with rich ornaments and sacred vessels for the use of the altar. He treated the ministers of religion with respect, and granted them many privileges. The bishops of Rome, hitherto persecuted in a particular manner, attracted his special notice. To them he gave the palace of Lateran for their residence; an adjoining palace he also gave to be converted into a church for divine service, called the Constantinian basilic; it is now the church of Saint John of Lateran. This was the first patrimony of the Popes. A change in favor of religion, so unexpected and so sudden, inspired the Christians with the purest joy for the present time, and with the most flattering hope respecting the time to come. With equal gratitude and surprise they considered it as the work of the most High. From the death of Pope Eutychianus in 283 to the creation of St. Silvester in 314 the following popes in succession sat in St. Peter's Chair: St. Caius, St. Marcellinus, St. Marcellus, St. Eusebius and St. Melchiades. The pretended fall of St. Marcellinus into idolatry, and his appearance upon it in the council of Sinuessa, is a mere fiction of the Donatists.

SECTION V.

Holy Fathers of the Desert.

(A. D. 316.) PERSECUTION, as we have mentioned above, drove many Christians from human society into the sheltering desert of Egypt. There, in silent solitude, remote from noise and alarms, they cultivated the quiet virtues of the gospel. Their intention was first to seek an asylum from their persecuting enemies; the interior consolation they experienced in the habits of a contemplative life then induced them to remain in the unmolested retreat they had chosen. The first who embraced this kind of life, and made it perpetual, was Paul, a native of Egypt, commonly called the first hermit; he entered upon it when about twenty years of age, during the violent persecution of Decius. A cavern in the rock was his dwelling; a neighboring fountain allayed his thirst; the leaves and fruit of a palm tree, that grew near, supplied him with food and raiment. During the latter years of his life he was fed, like Elias, by a raven, that brought him bread. Alternate labor and contemplation was his exercise. In this exercise he spent ninety years, and died at the age of 113, in 342.

Paul had many imitators of his solitude and virtues scattered up and down through the extensive wilds of Egypt. The most renowned amongst them is St. Antony. The virtues, the miracles, the temptations, the victories of this holy man, over the infernal spirits, have rendered his name famous in ecclesiastical history. Born of rich parents, he inherited an ample patrimony. Entering one day into the church and hearing the words of our blessed Saviour to the young man in the gospel, * “If thou wilt be perfect, go sell

* Luke xviii, v. 22.

all thou hast, give it to the poor, and thou shalt have a treasure in heaven," he applied the divine counsel to himself, and literally followed its direction. Thus, disengaged from all worldly concerns, the virtuous youth retired to the desert; to serve God alone, and to sanctify his soul by the exercise of every perfect virtue, that lay within the reach of a solitary life, was the sublime object he had in view, and that object he constantly kept before his eyes. The means he employed for the attainment of that object were manual labor, mortification, and prayer. By manual labor, he furnished himself with the few necessities of life he stood in need of, and what remained, he carefully reserved for the poor: by the help of corporal mortification he subjected his mind and senses in a most perfect manner to the law of God; by prayer, in fine, he warmed his soul with the purest sentiments of devotion, and closely united himself to God. His sole repast of the day consisted of bread and a little salt, he drank of the running stream, and his short repose at night was upon a mat, or the bare ground.

After some time spent in this manner, he crossed over to the western bank of the Nile, and penetrated into the dreary wilds of the Thebaid, in upper Egypt, where he hoped to live quiet, unmolested, and unknown to men. Satan, envious of his happiness, appeared to him in hideous shapes, and by various temptations endeavored to deter him from his virtuous course. The fiend's malicious endeavors only served to show how weak his power is against the true servants of God. By humility, by fasting, and by prayer, the Saint defeated and put him to flight. Antony, thus trained and exercised in the spiritual warfare, was destined by the Holy Ghost to be not only the example, but also the instructor of others in the divine service. The fame of his sanctity spread through the wilderness, which was now become

the resort of many devout solitaries. They flocked in crowds to his retreat, humbly requesting to put themselves under his direction, that they might thereby add to the virtues of evangelical poverty and chastity; the merit likewise of obedience. He considered and granted their request. Their numbers being great, he found it necessary to build dwellings for their reception. He then formed them into as many communities as there were houses, over which he appointed an abbot, or local superior. This was the beginning of the monastic order.

Some of these cenobites were ordained Priests, that all might have the benefit of the sacraments and mass celebrated amongst them. Every thing moved under the direction of St. Antony, according to the order he established of monastic discipline. Their monasteries are described by St. Athanasius, as so many houses of prayer, where the hours of the day are successively spent in singing the praises of God, in reading and meditating, in watching and fasting. Animated with a lively hope of never ending bliss, these holy solitaries, says he, hold the transitory goods of earth in contempt, as beneath their notice, while their incessant study is to perfect themselves in the habit of virtues the most pure and sublime. Their abstemious and austere mode of life impaired not their health, nor the active vigor of their minds: their serene and cheerful looks indicated a peace of soul which no enjoyment of perishable goods can give. St. Antony reached the hundred and fifth year of his age, and died in 356.

At the same time flourished the celebrated abbot St. Pacomius. He was a native of the Thebaid, born of idolatrous parents, and in his youth forced to serve in the army of Licinius against Maximin. By the sweet disposition of Divine Providence, he afterwards became a Christian, a

hermit, and the father of many monks. Having obtained his discharge at the end of the war, he put himself under the direction of a holy solitary, named Palemon, by whose instructions he made such rapid progress in the science of sanctity, that in a short time, he himself became an eminent master of a spiritual life. He founded the spacious monastery of Tabenna upon the banks of the Nile; the fame of his sanctity drew many fervent Christians together, who, under his conduct, composed different communities, widely spread through the barren desert of Thebaid, in the upper Egypt. He delivered to them a written rule, which, according to the account he himself gave to St. Palemon, was brought to him by an Angel, and by the observance of which, thousands arrived to the highest pitch of Christian perfection. He died in the year 348.

Another shining light of the desert was St. Hilarion, a native of Palestine. His idolatrous parents sent him at an early age to study grammar at Alexandria, where he embraced the Christian religion. From a child, he had ever expressed his dislike of paganism, and manifested a natural propensity for true virtue. Being baptized, and well grounded in the principles of religion, he felt himself inspired to study and learn the perfection of it in silent solitude. He put himself under St. Antony, who had fixed his residence on a mountain near the Red Sea. After some stay with him, he hastened back into his own country, to practice the sublime lessons he had received from his enlightened director. Finding his parents dead, he distributed his goods between his brothers and the poor, reserving nothing to himself, and retired into a wilderness which stretches along the coast of the Mediterranean sea. There he dwelt for many years, in the most rigid abstinence and total abnegation of himself. Yet, amidst all his rigors of a

mortified and devout life, God permitted him to experience strong temptations, with which the impure spirit long molested his imagination, but which he heroically overcame by the help of prayer, and an invincible fortitude of mind, aided by the grace of God. The fame of his sanctity spread abroad. Many flocked to see the wonderful man who had the gift of miracles, and to beg his prayers. In process of time he was joined by thousands of pious solitaries, whom he distributed into monasteries and trained to evangelical perfection. Prayer and manual work, by turns, were the whole occupation of these holy hermits. A few ounces of bread, with boiled legumes, or raw roots with a little salt, furnished them with a meal, which they took but once in the four and twenty hours, when the day was far spent. To weary nature they allowed no longer rest than was necessary to recruit their strength for the labor of the ensuing day. Some of them cultivated the ground, some made mats, and others baskets, which they sold, and with the price procured for themselves the few necessities they wanted, bread and clothing. What remained, they distributed among the poor. Such are the virtues which faithful history has recorded of these holy solitaries; virtues, at which self-conceited sophisters may sneer, but which more enlightened Christians will ever admire and revere. The Church no less abounds in examples than in the doctrine of evangelical perfection. She displays the character of true sanctity not only in her doctrine, but in her dutiful children, who, by following her doctrine, shine in every age, the bright examples of heroic virtue. St. Hilarion, notwithstanding the innocent, the penitential, and the holy life he had led, trembled with fear, when he saw the awful moment of his mortal dissolution was at hand. He considered how perfect ought to be the purity and sanctity of a soul that is

upon the point of appearing before a God of infinite holiness and justice. But while he trembled under that lively impression of the divine judgments, he encouraged his soul to an humble confidence in the mercy and merits of his Redeemer. "Go forth," said he to himself, "what dost thou fear? Go forth, my soul, what dost thou apprehend? It is near three score and ten years that thou hast served Christ, and art thou afraid of death?" Scarce had he spoke these words, when he placidly expired, in 371.

SECTION VI.

Baptism of Constantine.

(A. D. 324.) THE defeat and death of Maxentius left Constantine in possession of the whole west without a rival. Licinius, his brother-in-law and colleague in command, reigned in the east. The appearance of harmony and friendship, that seemed to subsist between them, gave hopes of lasting peace to the empire. But Licinius, equally faithless in his promises, and ambitious of power, imprudently sought to extend his dominions by new conquests. He declared war against Constantine, over whom he expected to gain the same glorious advantages that he had gained over Maximin. The loss of two battles had lost him his crown, and reduced him to the necessity of throwing himself upon the victor's clemency to save his life. Constantine not only pardoned, but generously gave him back his crown on certain conditions, which were not observed. In the perverse heart of Licinius, the generous conduct of a brother-in-law excited rather a desire of revenge than any

sentiments of gratitude. He looked out for a fresh subject of quarrel, and industriously provoked a renewal of war. He first commenced a cruel persecution against the Christians within his dominions, and then instigated the Sarmatians to invade the Roman territory. Constantine was roused to revenge the insult; a bloody war began with equal animosity on both sides; several battles were obstinately fought, with various success; the struggle at last ended in the total overthrow of Licinius, with the extinction of his whole race.

Constantine might now seem to have attained the summit of worldly grandeur: he commanded the whole Roman empire, without the appearance of any one to share or to contest his power. But Constantine was not yet a Christian. Singular were the marks of Providence which had hitherto watched over him, and brought his political projects to a happy issue: great, also, and decided was the support which he had given to the Christian religion, of which he avowed himself the friend and benefactor. But whether he should adopt the principles, and profess the tenets of that religion, he was not wholly determined. By a rescript he sent from Sardica to Rome, commanding the augurs to exercise the public functions of their office, in the manner they had formerly done, he sanctioned the Pagan superstitions. The Christians were alarmed, knowing what extensive powers the college of augurs had, in all religious matters, when permitted to act. Their alarms were too well grounded. The augurs grew insolent at the grant, and taking advantage of the emperor's absence, harrassed the Christians in their religious assemblies, and caused popular commotions in Rome. A kind of persecution was set on foot. Pope Silvester thought it neither safe nor prudent for

him to remain in the city. He privately withdrew and concealed himself in the mountain of Soracte.

During an uninterrupted succession of temporal prosperity, Constantine seems to have forgotten his religious purpose of embracing Christianity; nor was he yet sufficiently acquainted with Christian principles to grow wise unto salvation by the domestic lessons of affliction which he had lately met with. By Minervina, his first wife, he had a son named Crispus, a virtuous and comely prince, whose misfortune was to have been criminally courted and betrayed by his step-mother, the wicked Fausta. This faithless woman solicited him to an incestuous act, which his soul abhorred. With keen reproach he rejected her impudent suit. Disappointment immediately changed her fondness into rancor, and her criminal attachment into a desire of revenge. She took the first opportunity to accuse the chaste youth of a crime, which was solely her own. Constantine, too credulous and too hasty in admitting the charge, sought no further proof, but in his wrath, on the bare assertion of his unfaithful wife, condemned his innocent son to die. Fausta's slander lay not long undiscovered; her conjugal infidelities with other men were fully proved against her. The capital punishment which she thereby incurred and underwent, may have made some atonement for her guilt; but it could not repair the harm, nor efface the disgrace it brought upon the imperial family. Constantine ordered her to be stifled in a hot bath.

These calamities of his family humbled the pride of Constantine in the midst of victory; he felt their sting, but did not profit by them; he still neglected the call of heaven. The miraculous apparition of the Cross had assured him in express terms that in that sign, he should be victorious. The victories which he had gained over Maxentius,

Maximin, Licinius, and other tyrants of the earth, were the least part of what was portended by those very significant words, *In this be thou victorious*. In their full import those words moreover indicated a victory far more important to the world, and to Constantine himself; a victory, which was to overthrow the superstitious powers of idolatry, and to plant the triumphant standard of the Cross in the capitol of imperial Rome. The pride of worldly grandeur had hitherto stifled in Constantine's breast the humble sentiments of Christianity, and the din of war had rendered him deaf to the voice of the Almighty. In punishment for his neglect, God struck him with a leprosy.* Blinded by the superstitious errors of his youth, he consulted the augurs what he must do to be cured. They told him he must bathe in a bath of infant's blood. Whether they were serious in their answer, or whether they meant to reproach him for the kind of death to which he had condemned his wife Fausta, their patroness, it matters not, but he rejected with horror their inhuman proposal. In his sleep, on the following night, he saw two heavenly personages, known, by his description of them, to be St. Peter and St. Paul, who admonished him to find out Silvester, who lay concealed in the mountain of Soracte, and that from his hand he would receive the cure of his distemper in the salutary waters of baptism. Constantine awoke, in obedience to the heavenly admonition, sought out St. Silvester, and submitted himself to his direction. The holy Pope employed some days in instructing him in the necessary points of religion, after which he baptised him with the usual ceremonies in a place adjoining the church of St. John Lateran, known at this day by the name of Constantine's baptistery.

* See Baronius, Alford, an. 324.

These facts are so well attested by various authorities, that they never could have been called in question, were it not for a passage in Eusebius, the historian. Eusebius, whose authority is justly accounted great, where party interest is not concerned, makes no mention of Constantine being baptised by St. Silvester at Rome, but expressly tells us he was baptised by Eusebius of Nicomedia, in the suburbs of that city, a little before his death. The Latins, in general, give no credit to that assertion of an Arian writer, whose caution in suppressing many other interesting circumstances of Constantine's life is notorious. He had a particular interest to serve in suppressing the truth of that emperor's baptism. His baptism at Rome could not be related without its circumstances. The very mention of a leprosy would have made a harsh sound in the ears of his son Constantius. A courtly writer would be cautious not to pen down any thing that could hurt the feelings of his sovereign. The religious sentiments of Constantius were likewise to be considered, and as nicely managed. Constantius was an Arian, so was Eusebius, both equally disaffected to Silvester, for having anathematized their darling heresiarch. The honor then of having baptised the first Christian emperor was to be silently snatched from the Roman pontiff, and to be bestowed upon the bishop of Nicomedia, the ringleader of the Arian party. Besides the deadly blow which had been given them in the council of Nice, they had received several other defeats, which lowered them in the opinion of mankind: some bold attempt then became necessary to raise their sinking credit. Nothing could appear better calculated for their purpose than to represent Constantine the Great, the known protector of the Catholic doctrine, in his last sickness, asking and receiving baptism from an Arian bishop. The story is modestly

told; it even breathes an air of seeming piety and religion, but it cannot be well reconciled with what Eusebius himself writes of Constantine in other parts of his history. Hence serious doubts are entertained whether that passage be the genuine production of that celebrated historian, or rather the posthumous invention of some other Arian.

But, be that as it may, both Binius and Baronius, with great force of argument, conclude that the whole Greek account is a mere fiction. These learned authors ground the justness of their conclusion on the acts of a numerous council of Bishops held at Rome, in 324, with St. Silvester at their head, positively asserting that Constantine was baptised at Rome, and healed of his leprosy in the sacred font. These acts were signed by the emperor himself and his mother, St. Helen, as may be seen in the second volume of the Councils, printed at Paris, in the Louvre, 1664. In the second place they cite the authentic letter of Pope Arian to the bishops assembled in the second council of Nice, attesting the same fact, as the original acts of that council testify. These authorities are weighty and seemingly conclusive. Yet Fleury, the French ecclesiastical historian, makes no mention of them, but boldly presents us with the Greek account from Eusebius, as if no doubt either of its authenticity or its truth had been ever started.

SECTION VII.

Arianism.

(A. D. 324.) CONSTANTINE's religious conduct, from the date of his baptism, assumes a new aspect. Though he had long before acknowledged the absurdity of admitting a plurality of gods, yet he continued to encourage the public functions of the augurs, which made a part of the Pagan system. He had for years admired and protected the Christian religion, but had not hitherto made its precepts his rule of practice. At length, after the repeated warnings he had received from God, he seriously resolved to remain no longer in suspense between two irreconcilable contradictions, the errors of Paganism, and the truths of Christianity: he became steady and uniform not only in his belief, but in practice also of the Catholic religion. Hence Eusebius, in different parts of his writings, styles him "the servant of Christ, dear to God, endowed with the gifts of the Holy Ghost, a man of singular piety, innocent and faithful, religiously exact in performing all the duties of life, not ashamed of the profession, but glorying in the name, and signing his forehead at times with the salutary mark of a Christian." These unequivocal traits of a true believer in Jesus Christ, drawn by the pen of a Christian bishop, are no ways applicable to a heathen, or to a catechumen; they manifestly indicate and describe a person who has been baptised, and has exercised himself for some time at least in the practises of a Christian life. The fabulous story of Constantine's being admitted a catechumen only in his last sickness, and baptised upon his death bed, is consequently overthrown by the evidence of Eusebius himself.

After the defeat of Licinius, Constantine had no competitor in the empire, no enemy in the field to contend with. An universal peace left him free to attend more minutely to himself; sharp remorse also stimulated him to wash away the crimes of which his conscience accused him. Being then regenerated to God in the waters of baptism, and admitted into the bosom of the Church, we find him frequenting the assemblies of the faithful, joining in prayer with them, sitting in council with the bishops, and haranguing on different points of religion, annually celebrating the feast of Easter with singular marks of piety, pulling down the idolatrous temples, and erecting magnificent churches in their stead. The Church of St. John Lateran on Mount Cælius, that of St. Peter upon the Vatican hill, that of St. Paul in the Ostian way, and several others, all richly ornamented and endowed from the imperial treasury, are standing monuments of Constantine's liberality and religion. He distributed alms abundantly among the poor, particularly to orphans and widows; and on such maidens as were exposed to the danger of being ruined for want of bread, he bestowed suitable portions to enable them to marry. To the clergy, and to those who, by a special profession, devoted themselves to the divine service in a state of perpetual chastity, he granted many privileges and exemptions.

Under the protection of a Christian emperor, the Church was now free; the terrors of persecution were removed, the bishops lay under no restraint in the public exercise of their pastoral functions, the people ran to embrace a religion sanctioned by their beloved sovereign. Such was the pleasing aspect of affairs when heresy emerged from the dark abyss. Arius, a turbulent and ambitious priest of Alexandria, had aspired to the episcopal chair of that city,

but being defeated in his pretensions by the election of Alexander, he gave vent to his spleen, and began to declaim against the doctrine of that holy prelate. A mortified figure, an emaciated visage, and an imposing air of modesty, blended with a sedate maturity of age, gained him many partisans. Emboldened by their numbers he began to dogmatize against the divinity of Christ, and openly asserted that the Son of God was not equal to his Father in nature and substance. The doctrine was new; the faithful were shocked and scandalized. The good bishop Alexander sent for Arius, in a cool and friendly manner argued the matter with him, by exhortation, by letter, by every gentle method endeavored to bring him back to a right way of thinking, till finding him obstinately bent upon maintaining and propagating his errors, he convoked a synod of his suffragan bishops, and in form pronounced sentence of excommunication against him. He informed pope Silvester of what he had done.

Arius seemed struck at first, but soon recovering from the stroke, resolved to maintain his point, and to strengthen his party. With this design he secretly withdrew into Palestine, where he gained some proselytes, and from thence went to Nicomedia. There he worked himself into the good graces of Eusebius, the bishop of that city, who gave a favorable hearing to his doctrine, and from that time became a strenuous supporter of the Arian faction. Proud of this acquisition to his party, Arius grew bold, went back to Alexandria, and openly propagated his blasphemous tenets in defiance of all authority. The bishop renewed the sentence of excommunication against him, but that did not silence him. The spirit of novelty spread rapidly among the Alexandrians, the city was divided into two opposite parties, violently animated against each other, while some extolled the bishop's

zeal, and others condemned his proceedings as too severe. Some bishops even declared for Arius against his bishop. The most riotous disorders were apprehended. Notice was sent to Constantine, that he might provide for the public peace. Constantine consulted his confidant Eusebius, the bishop of Nicomedia, upon the matter. That false prelate cast all the blame upon Alexander, and advised the emperor to enjoin silence upon the two parties. The advice was treacherous, and as foreseen, ineffectual. For heresy is ever bold and clamorous; and the word of God on the other hand is not to be tied up. Constantine then commissioned Osius, the venerable bishop of Cordova, in Spain, to repair to Alexandria, and to meditate a peace, if possible, between the jarring parties. Osius found the task too great for his abilities. On the side of truth, no concession could be made; error was too obstinate to submit. In this state of things, the emperor concerted measures with St. Silvester to convene the bishops together from every part of the empire, and to have the question finally decided by an authority which no orthodox Christian can, consistently with his religion, refuse to obey.

SECTION VIII.

General Council of Nice.

(A. D. 325.) THE convocation of a general Council being resolved on, Nice, the principal city of Bithynia, was appointed for the place of rendezvous on account of its vicinity to Nicomedia, where the emperor then resided. Thither were the bishops invited to repair from the different

provinces of the empire. The emperor furnished them with money and conveniencies for their journey. Three hundred and eighteen bishops, besides priests and deacons, arrived at Nice for the day appointed, many of them bore in their maimed bodies the glorious marks of the conflicts they had sustained in defence of their faith during the late persecutions. On the nineteenth day of June, 325, they assembled in a spacious hall, well adapted for the purpose. The Pope St. Silvester, not being able to assist in person, on account of his great age, the celebrated Osius, with two deputed priests, Vitus and Vincent, presided in his name. The assembled bishops, each one sitting in order according to his rank, remained in profound silence till the emperor made his appearance, when all rose up. Constantine, magnificently attired in his imperial robes of state, unarmed, and without his guards, entered the hall with no other attendants than the Christian officers of his household. The manly comeliness of his person, and the awful majesty of his look, tempered with an air of unaffected modesty, drew respect from the whole assembly, who considered him as the guardian messenger of peace. He advanced through the middle to the upper end of the hall, where he remained standing before a lowly seat prepared for him, till a sign was made by the bishops for all to take their seats.

After a short pause, Eustathius, the venerable bishop of Antioch, rose and in few words explained to the Fathers the subject of dispute, which had been agitated in the church of Alexandria, and was now submitted to them for a final decision. Eustathius, having thus briefly stated the nature of the controversy, sat down again; a deep silence ensued, and every eye was turned on Constantine. He met their looks of expectation with a smiling countenance, then

pausing for some minutes, seemingly to recollect himself, he placidly addressed them in Latin, which was his native tongue, and the language of the empire. He began by expressing the lively satisfaction he felt at meeting so venerable an assembly on this important occasion: he said it was important, because the question they had to decide was nothing less, than whether Jesus Christ was truly God or not. He next called their attention to another material point, respecting the celebration of Easter-day. This point, he observed, had been already determined by the bishop of Rome, and his determination had been dutifully followed by the bishops of Italy, of Spain, of Gaul, of Britain, of Germany, of Africa, of Greece, and Egypt: the only provinces in which the pontifical decree was not duly observed, were Syria and Mesopotamia. In their discussion of these two points, the first of which regarded faith, the second ecclesiastical discipline, he warmly recommended them to unanimity and dispatch, assuring them that he sat there as a hearer only, not as judge of the controversy, that he should attend their deliberations, not to control, but to support the freedom of debate, not to dictate, but to receive their decisions, which he should revere as the oracles of heaven, and maintain with his whole authority. His speech was then repeated in Greek, for the better information of the Greek bishops, who were more conversant in their own than in the Latin language, after which the Council entered upon business.

Arius, who had been denounced as the author and propagator of impious doctrines, was cited to appear before the Council. He appeared with all that boldness, which the consciousness of having secured a party amongst his judges was capable of inspiring. In fact, he had gained over to his side twenty-two bishops, of whom the most distinguished

were the two Eusebius' of Nicomedia, and Cesarea in Palestine. Trusting to the interest and abilities of these prelates, and blindly confident of success, he openly declared his sentiments concerning the divinity of Jesus Christ, and flatly denied him to be God. The sound of this blasphemous declaration, gave a general shock to the Fathers of the Council, many of whom showed the wounds and honorable scars they had received in testimony of their firm belief in his divinity. The Eusebians, however, blushed not to deliver a contrary opinion, and a warm dispute ensued. To cut the matter short, the Council had immediate recourse to Scripture and Tradition. Each bishop was called upon to declare the doctrine he had received on the point in question, from his predecessors in that particular See. From Scripture, it was clearly evinced that Jesus Christ was truly God, and by tradition, or the concurrent testimony of all particular churches there represented in union with the See of Rome, it was fully ascertained that the divinity of Jesus Christ had been always held and taught by the church as a fundamental tenet of Catholic belief.

The point of faith being thus settled and confirmed by the Council, the next subject of consideration was to express the truth in so forcible and concise a manner as to leave no room for quibble or evasion to the Arian party. For the Eusebians readily admitted all the texts of Scripture that were adduced in proof of Christ's divinity; but those texts they either explained away by subtle sophistry, or wrested to their own sense. They even admitted the term *God* to be strictly applicable to Jesus Christ; but in that sense only, in which the Psalmist speaks as quoted by our blessed Saviour himself in St. John,* "I have said, ye are Gods, and sons, all of the Most-high." To silence these

* c. x. v. 34.

quibbles, the term *Homoousios*, or Consubstantial, was proposed, and finally adopted to express the doctrine which the Arians sought to evade. The term imports an identity of substance eternally existing in the divine nature between the Father and the Son; it expresses the co-equality of Jesus Christ with God the Father in nature, in substance, in divinity, and in all perfection from eternity. By the admission of this term, the Eusebians saw their whole system would be overturned at once, and therefore exerted all their abilities to have it set aside, as new and unwarranted by Scripture. Equally futile and deceitful was the pretext. With the exception of five bishops only, the Council unanimously declared that the term Consubstantial, though new in itself, contained no new doctrine, nothing but what the Scripture taught in other words, nothing but what the Church had always believed from its first institution by Christ. The term is inserted in the formulary, which is called the Nicene Creed, and stands to all succeeding ages, as the touchstone of orthodox belief in the divinity of Jesus Christ.

The question of faith being thus finally decided, the Council proceeded to enact certain canons for the regulation of ecclesiastical discipline. Amongst these canons, that which fixes the uniform celebration of Easter-day, justly claims our first notice. It enacts that Easter-day, in future, shall be universally kept on the first Sunday after the first full moon that follows the vernal equinox. Every point, for which the Council had been called, being now discussed and regulated, the bishops proceeded in due order to sign their own decision. In the first place appears the name of Osius, as president, holding the place of Silvester, the Roman Pontiff. Before they separated, they drew up and directed a synodical epistle to St. Silvester, whom they styled the

blessed Pope of Rome, requesting him to confirm their decrees by his apostolical authority. Thus, at the end of five weeks, ended the celebrated Council of Nice, which the Church has ever held in the greatest veneration. Happy at so important an event, Constantine gave a public entertainment to the Bishops before they separated, made them handsome presents, and dismissed them with honor to their respective homes. Particular instructions had been given by the Council to have its decrees duly notified to the absent bishops, and Constantine published two imperial mandates to enforce their observance through the whole empire.



SECTION IX.

Invention of the Cross.

(A. D. 326.) POPE SILVESTER, having received the Acts of the Council, immediately assembled the bishops of Italy, and by his apostolical authority confirmed its decrees for the whole Church. For such is the rule, says Socrates, the historian,* that no decrees shall bind universally, unless sanctioned by the bishops of Rome. With this supreme sanction, the decrees of the Nicene Council were respectfully received every where by the Christian world. Some few individuals, indeed, had the impious audacity to form an opposition, at the head of which was Arius himself, Eusebius, the bishop of Nicomedia, and Theognis, bishop of Nice. Banishment, by the emperor's order, was the punishment of their rebellion.

* L. 2. c. 13.

The abettors of heresy, being thus silenced for the present, Constantine, with Helen, his mother, made a progress into Palestine. That pious empress, now eighty years of age, had long wished to visit the land which the Son of God, in human form, had sanctioned by his footsteps, and to find the Cross on which he had consummated the world's redemption. She was told, that to succeed in this undertaking, she must first find the holy Sepulchre, which lay buried, according to tradition, under a mountain of earth. The fact is thus stated: In primitive times, the Christians used to flock in crowds to the sacred grotto, and there pray. This gave offence to the inveterate Jews, still remaining up and down in the country. They maliciously informed Adrian, the emperor, of these religious meetings, and expressed their apprehensions of the dangerous consequences that were likely to ensue from them to the ancient worship. Adrian thought there might be ground for such apprehensions, and therefore gave immediate orders that the whole circumference of Calvary should be covered with an immense mound of earth. The order, at a vast expense, and with infinite labor, was carried into effect, and a Pagan temple, with the statue of Venus erected on the top. St. Helen, with a pure motive, undertook to undo what Adrian had done two hundred years before. Numbers of hands were set to work, a whole mountain was removed, they came to the surface of the old mount of Calvary: the holy Sepulchre was at last discovered, and near it was found the Cross, with other instruments of our Saviour's crucifixion. The memory of this invention is celebrated annually by the Church, on the third of May. The emperor ordered three magnificent churches to be built, one over the holy Sepulchre, another not far distant on mount Olivet, in honor of our Lord's ascension, and a third at Bethlehem, in honor of his birth.

Round the church of the Sepulchre, was built a new town, opposite to the old one, and not in the same place. This is thought by some to be the New Jerusalem predicted by the Prophets.

In the course of this year, 326, while Constantine was in the east, died Alexander the holy bishop of Alexandria. Athanasius, who had accompanied him to the Council of Nice, was chosen his successor. Athanasius was a name dreaded by the Arian faction. They were well apprised of his learning, of his piety, of his steady and active vigor in opposing a doctrine which they were determined to revive. The emperor's firm attachment to the Council deterred them, for the present, from acting openly, but they spared no pains in working underhand to retrieve their baffled cause. The banishment of their heresiarch and his chief supporters had lost them the favor of the people. To recover this loss, was the first and principal object to be aimed at, and this could be no otherwise effected than by the recall of their friends from banishment, and the disgrace of their chief antagonists, Athanasius and Eustathius, neither of which could be obtained without the emperor's concurrence. How to gain or to surprise him into their schemes, was the difficulty. The sickness of Constantia, his favorite sister, and widow of Licinius, furnished them with a fair and successful opportunity.

Constantia had unfortunately conceived a high opinion of Eusebius, the banished bishop of Nicomedia. The Arian priest, who attended her in her illness, knew it, and represented to her, that if she could but obtain his and his friends recall, it would be an act highly meritorious. Constantine loved his sister even to fondness, he made her frequent visits during this her last illness: she had gained a fatal influence over him against his reason and religion. She

exerted it in those tender circumstances ; when a denial could scarce be uttered, she exerted it in favor of Arius, and his friends Eusebius and Theognis. By her moving and repeated intreaties, she made the emperor believe that these false men had only erred in the manner of expressing themselves, that their sentiments were perfectly orthodox, and that a mistaken punishment of innocent church-men might be attended with dangerous consequences to the empire and religion. Constantine unhappily let himself be prevailed on, he permitted the culprits, upon their making an equivocal and counterfeit submission, to return from exile. Their return was the prelude to melancholy scenes both in church and state.

SECTION X.

Intrigues of the Arians.

(A. D. 328.) THE Arian chiefs, being now at liberty, lost no time in setting their engines to work for the establishment of their plan, which was to plant Arianism in Egypt, and all over the east. With this view, Eusebius, of Nicomedia, and his confidential friend Theognis, the bishop of Nice, set off for Palestine, under the pretext of visiting the magnificent churches which were there building, but in fact to procure the ruin of Eustathius, the learned and holy bishop of Antioch, whom they considered as one of their most powerful opponents. There they met with Eusebius, of Cæsarea, and several other bishops of the Arian interest, with whom they concerted measures for the removal of Eustathius from his church. Under the mask of friendship,

they paid him a visit in their return from Jerusalem. The unsuspecting prelate received them kindly, and on their proposing to hold a synod with him for the good of religion, he readily consented. During the session they introduced a common prostitute, whom they had hired, with an infant at her breast, impudently asserting it to be the child of Eustathius. In vain did the virtuous prelate protest against the infamous slander; the cabal was formed; on the woman's unsupported assertion he was pronounced guilty, and sentence of deposition passed against him by iniquitous judges, who had no jurisdiction over him. Eusebius immediately posted away with the account to Constantine, who ratified the uncanonical sentence, and sent the innocent Eustathius into banishment.

This victory being thus obtained, Eusebius directed his next attack against Athanasius, an antagonist in his eyes still more formidable than Eustathius. Athanasius, soon after his promotion to the patriarchal chair of Alexandria, made a visitation of all the churches subject to the jurisdiction of that See, which then held the next rank to that of Rome. He visited not only each bishop in his respective diocese, but also the solitary ascetics, who lived in cells dispersed through the wilds of Egypt. A modern Sophister of this refining age, who has never known or conceitedly rejects the evangelical counsels of perfection, may fancy, and even write, that these devout solitaries had probably mistaken their object; but the enlightened Athanasius has formed a very different opinion of them. He found their plan of life to be a holy one, their motive pure, and their virtues perfect. To subdue their passions, to sanctify their souls, and to make their election sure, by an uninterrupted practice of good works, was the noble object they had in

view. By their example the holy prelate felt himself animated with fresh vigor to maintain the cause of religion. He prevailed upon St. Antony to come down from his mountain, and to visit Alexandria, that by word and example he might encourage the faithful to persevere in their faith against the Arians, who were all this while very active in disseminating their errors, and had gained an alarming number of bishops over to their party. But Eusebius, of Nicomedia, thought little done as long as Athanasius governed the See of Alexandria, and therefore resolved not to rest till he had procured his deposition or his banishment. The return of Arius to Alexandria, furnished him with a good ground to work upon. The emperor, by recalling that heresiarch from exile, had implicitly acknowledged his innocence. Athanasius persisted in refusing to receive him into his communion. Eusebius wrote to him upon the subject; Athanasius replied, that he could not possibly admit an arch-heretic, who stood publicly anathematized by an œcumenical council. The answer was such as he expected: a similar answer to the emperor himself, who was naturally jealous of his authority, and expected immediate obedience to all his mandates, he hoped would create a quarrel, and effect the patriarch's ruin. With this malignant view, he persuaded the unguarded Constantine to send Athanasius an absolute order to receive Arius into his communion, under the penalty of deposition and exile. The intrepid minister of God made answer, "that a heresy, which attacked the divinity of Jesus Christ, could have no communion with the Catholic Church." The answer appeared to Constantine so just and satisfactory, that far from provoking his resentment, it gained his approbation.

Eusebius, seeing his first scheme thus prove abortive, had recourse to a second, more iniquitous and more successful.

Crimes of the blackest die, treason, adultery, sacrilege, and murder were forged, and thrown upon the virtuous patriarch. The accusation was in due form laid before the emperor, and false witnesses were secretly suborned to give color to the charge. The allegations wore a plausible appearance, and made a strong impression upon the mind of Constantine. He ordered a competent number of bishops to assemble at Cæsarea, in Palestine, and to examine if there were sufficient grounds for so heinous an accusation. These transactions passed in the year 331, but the bishops did not meet till the year 334, and they then met at Tyre, to the number of sixty, chiefly Arians, of whom the two Eusebiuses were the busy leaders and contrivers of the whole plot. In compliance with the emperor's orders, Athanasius likewise repaired thither with some orthodox bishops of Egypt. On his entering the place of assembly, he was received with the utmost marks of disgrace, being allowed to stand, like a public criminal, before an heterodox cabal that had conspired to accuse, to judge, and condemn him. The good Egyptians remonstrated against this unworthy treatment of their patriarch. Their remonstrances were disregarded; the determined resolution of the Eusebians was to defame and oppress the innocent at all hazards. An impudent woman was introduced to swear a rape against him. The woman did not so much as know Athanasius; she positively swore the crime on Timothy, his priest, who undertook to personate him before the judges, and by her barefaced perjury acquitted the accused prelate. Another head of accusation was the supposed murder of one Arsenius, whom Eusebius had secretly confined and reported to have been maimed and murdered by Athanasius: in proof of this was shown the hand of a dead man, as having been

cut off for some magic purpose. But Arsenius, in the interim, had escaped from confinement, came to Tyre, and unexpectedly appeared in the middle of the assembly, sound of both hands, a living evidence of Arian villainy. With similar demonstrations of innocence on one hand, and of malicious slander on the other, every charge of criminality was completely done away beyond the possibility of a doubt. But, as if every charge had been proved true, as clearly as it was proved false, the iniquitous judges pronounced sentence of deposition against the guiltless patriarch.

Constantine was at that time busily occupied in directing the building of his new city, to which he gave the name of Constantinople. Thither Eusebius transmitted to him the sentence of Athanasius' deposition. Athanasius, by the advice of his friends, followed soon after to lay before the emperor the true state of what passed at Tyre. He requested an audience, but previous care had been taken that he should not be admitted. Constantine grounded his conduct in this affair upon the authority of what he called the council of Tyre, and notwithstanding the strong presumption that appeared against the legality of its decrees, suffered himself to be betrayed into an act the most tyrannical and unjust. But lest the decrees of his Arian cabal should not work their desired effect on the mind of Constantine, Eusebius backed them with a new forgery, charging Athanasius with a design of stopping the transportation of grain from Egypt to Constantinople. This imaginary attempt upon the civil jurisdiction, exasperated the incredulous emperor, and provoked him to dictate, without further examination, a peremptory order that banished the slandered patriarch to Treves, the capital city of Belgic Gaul.

SECTION XI.

Death of Constantine.

(A. D. 337.) CONSTANTINE, by this proceeding against Athanasius, left the Arians at liberty to establish their errors without opposition. Being flattered by the Eusebiuses into a false persuasion that Arianism was now totally extinct, he became, without design, the fatal promoter of it. He sent an order to the Assembly, still sitting at Tyre, to repair at his expense to Jerusalem for the solemn dedication of his church of the holy Sepulchre. It was a noble structure, finished with equal taste and magnificence. The ceremony of its dedication was performed with great pomp. The bishops, during their stay at new Jerusalem, employed their time in private conferences upon various subjects of religion, in external acts of devotion, and in fulsome panegyric upon Constantine, which gave Eusebius, of Cæsarea, an advantageous opportunity of displaying his talents in that kind of eloquence. Whenever a great man is weak enough to appear pleased with flattery, he will always find a parasite ready to bestow it. Such was Constantine's misfortune.

In the midst of these solemn ceremonies, who should appear but Arius himself, bearing an equivocal profession of his faith in one hand, and a letter of recommendation from Constantine in the other, praying the bishops to receive him into their communion. His prayer was granted. Proud of this advantage, he hastened to Alexandria, not doubting of a favorable reception, since Athanasius was no longer there. But the Catholic clergy knew his duplicity too well to be imposed upon, either by his protestations, or by the hypocrisy of the Eusebians. They refused to communicate with

him. Thus disappointed, the impostor went to Constantinople, flattering himself with the thought of being there received by the emperor's order in a more distinguished manner. His friend Eusebius, of Nicomedia, was there, who, on the assurance of his orthodoxy, obtained an order from Constantine for his admission into the communion of the Catholic Church. The order manifestly stretched beyond the bounds of civil authority, and trespassed upon the ecclesiastical jurisdiction; it was directed to Alexander, the last bishop of Byzantium, and the first of Constantinople. The venerable prelate, who had assisted at the Council of Nice, humbly remonstrated that the order could not be executed with a safe conscience. Eusebius thought to intimidate him into a compliance by threats, telling him to reflect on Athanasius' disgrace, and to consult his own interest. On a Saint who had never learnt to make his Christian duty subservient to worldly considerations, such threats made no impression.

Eusebius finding he could not carry his scheme with the consent of Alexander, resolved to carry it against his consent. He fixed the day for its execution. He fixed upon a Sunday, that the concourse of people, being more numerous, the act might be more notorious. Alexander had nothing but his prayers to oppose against the violence that was offered him. In sore affliction he most earnestly prayed that God, by some visible effect of his power, would either prevent the daring insult in agitation against his divine Son, or take him out of life not to behold it. Prostrate before the altar, he thus prayed the whole night. In the morning, at the appointed hour, the Eusebians, with great parade, led forth their hero in procession towards the Church. In the way, Arius had a pressing call of nature: he stept aside to a proper place of convenience; the procession stood still

They waited some time expecting his return; they grew impatient, they sent to see what was become of him. They found him dead, with his bowels voided out upon the ground.

The public voice immediately proclaimed the fact: it was too public to be concealed or denied. The Eusebians were dumb; the avenging stroke of divine justice was manifest; Constantine at length began to think that he had been deceived. In that perplexity of thought he wrote to recommend himself and sons to the prayers of the celebrated Antony in the desert, of whom he had long entertained a very high esteem. The holy abbot in answer gave him good instructions, and pressingly exhorted him to recal from exile the much injured Athanasius. This last advice did not please. Constantine of late had been in the habit of listening to slander rather than to truth. But affliction soon after gave him understanding. Falling dangerously ill, he expressed his intention, and gave directions accordingly, for the recall of Athanasius, in spite of all Eusebius could say to dissuade him from it. Finding his illness to increase, he devoutly prepared for death, confessed his sins, received absolution, and every other spiritual help that the Church affords to dying Christians. He died at his castle of Achrion, in the suburbs of Nicomedia, on Pentecost Sunday, in the year 337, after a reign of thirty-one years. The splendor of his military, of his political, and religious achievements has justly acquired him the surname of Great. His remains were carried to Constantinople, according to his direction, and deposited near the altar in the Church of the Apostles. The motive of his giving that direction was, that he might reap the benefit of the mystical sacrifice, and the communion of devout prayers for the repose of his soul, as Eusebius writes.*

* L. iv. c. 71.

SECTION XII.

Violence of the Arians.

(A. D. 341.) CONSTANTINE the Great left three sons, Constantine, Constantius, and Constans, in favor of whom he divided the empire into three parts. To Constantine, the eldest, he devised Britain, Spain, Gaul, and all that lies on this side the Alps. Constantius, his second son, inherited Thrace, Asia Minor, Egypt, and the east. Constans, the youngest, had Italy, Africa, Greece, and Illyricum. The Eusebians had gained over Constantius to their party. His protection made them bold; they dissembled their sentiments no longer, they formed the project of setting up a new patriarch of Alexandria, in the room of St. Athanasius. But their project was, for that time, disconcerted by Constantine, the younger, who lost no time in sending back Athanasius to his Church, as the late emperor had directed in his last sickness. Constantius durst not oppose it. The return of the illustrious exile was a day of joy and triumph to the Alexandrians. But their joy was soon interrupted by fresh disturbances. The Eusebians invented new calumnies against the holy patriarch, and by deputies boldly laid their accusations before the three emperors and Julius, the Roman pontiff. Julius had succeeded St. Mark, the immediate successor of St. Silvester, in the holy See. Constantine and Constans made them no answer; Julius agreed, with Athanasius' consent, to hear and judge between the two parties. Constantine was soon after cut off by an untimely death. In him the Catholic cause lost a powerful protector; his territories were added to those of Constans, and thus the empire became divided into two parts, the eastern and the western. About the same time also died

the celebrated historian, Eusebius of Cæsarea, and St. Alexander of Constantinople. Paul, commended by Alexander for his learning and exemplary life, was chosen his successor: but Constantius caused him to be deposed, and placed Eusebius of Nicomedia in his room. This gave the Arians a decided superiority over the Catholics at Constantinople, which they maintained with great violence for the space of forty years.

Athanasius, in the interim, remained not inactive. He assembled a council at Alexandria, in which about a hundred bishops met to concert measures for the good of that Church. They reviewed the proceedings that had been carried on against their patriarch, and after a full investigation of the whole, declared him innocent of the crimes charged upon him by his persecutors: they moreover declared the sentence of deposition, pronounced against him by the Arian conventicle of Tyre, to be unjust and absolutely null. With this justification of his conduct, Athanasius repaired to Rome in order to meet his accusers, who had requested to be heard before that tribunal. Julius again and again had summoned them to come and exhibit their grounds of complaint, according to their engagement. They as often held back on some excuse or other, and at last, flatly said, they could not come. For, upon reflection, they did not choose to face their antagonists before an impartial tribunal, having but little hopes of success, where the principle of fair discussion left no room for bribery or cabal. Besides that, Eusebius, who could never remain quiet, was then engaged in the solemn declaration of a new Church at Antioch, where he was met by near a hundred bishops, of whom forty were Arians. He embraced that opportunity of holding a synod with them, and enacting some canons, that favored his secret designs against Athanasius. His

design was to exclude the holy bishop for ever from the Church of Alexandria, and to place another in his stead, as it had been already concerted between him and Constantius.

Julius now perceiving that the Eusebians had laid aside all thoughts of appearing before him at Rome, entered upon the examination of Athanasius' cause with fifty other bishops, whom he had called together for that purpose. Accurate information had been taken of the whole business from its very origin. On that authentic information they proceeded, which, being corroborated by the clearest evidence of many living witnesses there present on the occasion, left not the smallest ground for doubt upon the true merits of the cause. Julius pronounced Athanasius innocent of the crimes maliciously imputed to him, and wholly free from all censure which the unjust judgment, given against him in the conventicle of Tyre, may have been thought to inflict.

While justice was thus done to the virtuous patriarch at Rome, the most outrageous violence was offered to his rights at Alexandria. Under the direction of Eusebius, the election of another patriarch was brought on and carried in favor of one Gregory, a Cappadocian by birth, and an Arian in belief. The Catholics loudly complained of the injury done thereby to Athanasius, to the Clergy, and the Church. Philagrius, the governor of Egypt, an apostate to Heathenism, well known for his cruel and persecuting temper, was sent thither to enforce the emperor's order. By every kind of vexation he tried to make the Catholics acknowledge the intruder Gregory for their bishop; but seeing them steady in their opposition, and bent upon having no communication with him, he encouraged a licentious mob, composed of Arians, Jews and Pagans, to break into the Churches where the Catholics assembled apart for divine service. From such a mob every kind of violence was expected and committed.

The sanctuary was plundered, the altars profaned with Pagan rites, virgins publicly stript and violated, many, in fine, were beaten to death, amongst whom was Potamon, the holy bishop of Heraclea, who for his faith had already lost an eye in the persecution of Maximin. This was the last wicked scene that Eusebius had the direction of. He died soon after, in a very advanced age, at Constantinople; but the Arian party died not with him. They, who had been his coadjutors in supporting heresy, now took the lead. Theognis the bishop of Nice, Ursacius and Valens, bishops of Singidon and Mursa, in Upper Hungary.

SECTION XIII.

Council of Sardica.

(A. D. 347.) ST. ATHANASIUS, though acquitted and confirmed in the See by Julius, could not with safety return thither on account of the violence of his enemies, who carried every thing by armed force. The religious emperor Constans, considered his cause as the public cause of catholicity, and used his most strenuous endeavors to serve him. By his desire, a number of western bishops assembled at Milan to confer on the subject of religion with some of the orientals, who were deputed thither by their Arian brethren. These produced a prolix formulary of faith, which they desired all present to subscribe previously to every other question of debate. The western prelates said they were satisfied with the formulary of Nice, and in their turn proposed that the orientals should join with them in condemning the doctrine of Arius. This proposal the orientals

rejected with apparent marks of disgust, and immediately quitted Milan in very bad humor. This passed in the year 346. Constans still persisted in his endeavors for peace. At the solicitation of Julius, of Osius, and St. Maximin, of Treves, he wrote a pressing letter to his brother Constantius, that he would consent to have a general council held in order to compose the religious disputes that divided the Christian world. Constantius consented; Sardica, a town of Illyricum, upon the borders of the two empires, was appointed for the place of rendezvous.

In May, 347, about three hundred bishops met according to notice, of whom eighty were oriental Arians. Pope Julius excused himself from assisting in person; and his excuses being accepted, he sent two priests, Archidamus and Philoxenes, with Leo, a deacon, to represent him. The subject to be treated and decided by them consisted of three points: the first regarded faith, the second regarded the grounds of accusation against Athanasius, and the third regarded the accusations brought against the Eusebians. The oriental bishops, on their arrival at Sardica, saw they had no chance of carrying any one point, where the imperial power was not to interfere. Conscious of the badness of their cause, and unwilling to undergo the confusion of hearing themselves declared calumniators to their face, framed pretences for not assisting at the public sessions, and at last resolved to leave the town. They went off by night to Philippopolis, a town in Thrace, where they formed a schismatical synod apart. Their retreat hindered not the remaining prelates at Sardica from continuing their sessions, or from coming to a final decision upon the points in question.

With regard to faith, it was proposed that a new formula should be drawn up and received. Some urged the

proposal with great warmth, but the Council wisely rejected it, as injurious to that of Nice, which they judged to be perfectly clear and explicit. The Fathers then made no new decree respecting faith, but confirmed the old one, to which they deemed nothing wanting. They next proceeded to examine the cause of Athanasius, whom, after a diligent discussion, they pronounced innocent, as he had been pronounced before at Alexandria and Rome. The declared innocence of Athanasius, necessarily involved the guilt of the Eusebian faction. The Council, in consequence, pronounced sentence of excommunication against Gregory, the usurper of the See of Alexandria, and eight other episcopal leaders of that party.

The schismatical synod of Philippopolis held its sessions at the same time, and formed decisions in contradiction to those of Sardica; it excommunicated and dealt about its impotent censures upon Julius, Osius, Athanasius, and other eminent persons of the Catholic party. But they dated none of these acts from Philippopolis, the place of their spurious origin, fearing lest they might have thereby given an authentic proof of their being both schismatics and heretics. They dated them from Sardica, and styled themselves of the Catholic Council. This usurpation of place and title has occasioned confusion among the ignorant, and has led even some writers into a mistaken statement of this particular part of history. The Council held in Sardica is universally admitted to be a true Council, though called by some an appendix to that of Nice. The synod held by the orientals at Philippopolis, was a schismatical conventicle of pure Arians, who on their way to Sardica agreed to act the part they did, and to submit to no ecclesiastical decision, as Macarius and Asterius, two eastern bishops, solemnly

declared and separated from them on that account, to join those of the west.

Osius, who had presided at Nice, seems to have taken the lead at Sardica in forming the decrees and canons of discipline there enacted. The Fathers of the Council, having fulfilled the whole object of their meeting, directed letters to Julius, and the two emperors, for the speedy execution of their decrees. Constantius showed a tardy reluctance for the execution of decrees which did not please him. But necessity left him no choice. He had a heavy war to maintain against Persia, and his brother Constans threatened him with a civil war, if he did not restore Athanasius, and punish his calumniators. In these circumstances, he resolved to do, with a good grace, what he could not avoid doing, even against his will. In terms the most flattering, he wrote no less than three letters to Athanasius, entreating him to return with all speed to Alexandria, where he was earnestly expected by his faithful flock. The death of Gregory, the usurper, opened to him a peaceful entry. The holy patriarch immediately assembled his suffragan bishops, and confirmed the decrees of Sardica. St. Maximus did the same in a numerous synod at Jerusalem. Religion now seemed to triumph. Many Arian bishops embraced the opportunity to retract their errors and their calumnies against the bishop of Alexandria. Ursacius and Valens appeared among the penitent; though their relapse soon after, forms a strong presumption that their repentance was not sincere.

SECTION XIV.

Tyranny of Constantius.

(A. D. 355.) THE zealous exertions of Constans for the orthodox faith, had their recompence, we hope, in a better world, they had none in this. Magnentius, who commanded in Gaul, threw off his allegiance, and suddenly commenced a civil war against his sovereign. Ambitious of a crown, he resolved to snatch it from the brow of Constans. But trusting more to the dagger of an assassin, than to the attachment of an army, which he had drawn into rebellion, caused him to be basely murdered in 350. He then took upon himself the title of emperor; Gaul, Italy, and Africa, submitted to his usurpation, while it lasted—for it lasted not long. Constantius lost no time in attacking the usurper before he could well establish his ill-gotten power. He led his army in person against the rebels, though he did not choose to expose his life in the field. The contest lasted upwards of three years, before the death of Magnentius, by his own sword, put an end to it, and made Constantius sole master of the Roman empire.

This revolution of power in the empire, rallied the broken spirits of the Arians, who did not doubt of being soon able to carry their point under the protection of an emperor, who was their friend by inclination, and who, by a sudden turn of his affairs, was at liberty to act as they should direct. Arianism had hitherto been confined within the boundary of the east; under the imperial banner it now began its progress towards the west. Constantius, in his expedition against Magnentius, led with him a courtly train of oriental bishops, all Arians and servile sycophants. These prelates still nourished an implacable hatred against

the prelate of Alexandria, whose eminent virtues were lately become as well known in the west as in the east. His active zeal was the terror of their party, nor had they any hope of raising their own credit but upon the ruin of his. They began to forge fresh matter of complaint, and to disseminate new slanders against the holy man, in order to destroy the high opinion which the western world entertained of his sanctity and talents. Constantius, who, by nature, as well as by habit, was both a tyrant and a persecutor, readily lent them his authority to oppress the man he never liked. In that hostile humor he continued his journey into the western parts of the empire. A number of Arian bishops composed a part of the imperial retinue.

These plotting prelates, even on their journey, began to prepare the work which they hoped to see soon accomplished. They drew out a string of accusations against the bishop of Alexandria, and sent them to Liberius, who had succeeded Julius in the pontificate. These accusations were all of a civil nature. They accused him of being a disturber of the public peace, a fomentor of religious and civil discord, an enemy to his sovereign, and therefore unworthy of the communion he enjoyed with the holy See. They wisely said nothing of his doctrine: Athanasius saw the storm gathering round him, wrote a respectful letter to warn the emperor against the calumnies of his enemies, and published what is called his great apology to his friends. In this apology he establishes the most solid proofs of his innocence, and by an unanswerable force of argument, evinces, that after having been thrice acquitted by his canonical judges at Alexandria, Rome, and Sardica, he cannot with any show of justice or reason be brought to another trial. Liberius answered the emperor and Arian

bishops, that he could not think of cutting off from his communion a venerable prelate, whom the Catholic world universally respected; he desired that a Council might be convened to compose their differences. Two and twenty bishops actually met at Arles, where the emperor was; Liberius deputed Vincent, the bishop of Capua, to preside in his name. The orientals had the superiority in numbers, in interest, and court influence; violence bore down all rational resistance; Athanasius was condemned; Vincent, the pope's legate, intimidated by threats, signed the condemnation. The holy Father was grievously afflicted at the prevarication of his legate, and immediately employed all means in his power to wipe away the disgrace that attended it.

The convocation of a more numerous council was loudly demanded by both parties, but with very different views. Liberius wished to procure a solid union; the orientals meant to force the western bishops to subscribe the condemnation of Athanasius. Constantius issued a general order for the bishops of the Church to meet him at Milan. They assembled accordingly, in the year 355, upwards of three hundred from the west, and only few from the east. The Pope deputed three legates to represent him in the council. They began their sessions in the Church of Milan; but a violent contest arising whether they should first take into their consideration the public question of faith, or the personal cause of St. Athanasius, and some apprehensions being entertained, lest the people should interfere, Constantius removed the sessions from the Church to the palace. There he lorded it over all the bishops with a despotic hand, declared himself the accuser of Athanasius, and insisted upon their signing his condemnation without further examination. Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari, in Sardinia, one

of the Pope's legates, St. Eusebius, of Vercelli, and some other prelates, strongly remonstrated, that such a procedure was not only unjust, but illegal, and contrary to the canons: the imperial despot in wrath replied, that his will was the canon they had to follow and no other, drew his sword, as if he intended to order them for immediate execution, and then bade them choose either prompt obedience to his will, or instant exile. The major part of the bishops basely purchased their peace by a forced compliance; the rest departed into banishment, with the testimony of a peaceful conscience. Such was the issue of Constantius' council of Milan.

SECTION XV.

Persecution of Constantius.

(A. D. 356.) CONSTANTIUS having extorted an unjust sentence from the assembly of Milan, sent a chamberlain to obtain from Pope Liberius a confirmation of it. The chamberlain went, well supplied with menaces and presents to gain the desired approbation by one way or the other. The steady Pontiff heeded not his threats, and with a noble disdain rejected his simonical presents. The emperor ordered him to Milan under a strong guard, hoping to intimidate him by his presence, but finding him inflexible, banished him to Berræa, a town in Thrace. A general persecution then commenced, and bitter desolation overspread the Church of Christ. The violences exercised by the Arians against the Catholics, were every where great, but no where greater than in Egypt. No less than ninety bishops in that

province alone, were driven from their Sees, and replaced by Arians. The chief scene of outrage and bloodshed was at Alexandria, where Athanasius, the prime object of Arian animosity, had resided for some time past without molestation. His life being now in danger, his faithful flock compelled him to retire with the hope of being able to appear again in better times. He retired among the devout inhabitants of the desert. But a price being set upon his head, the wildernesses were ransacked by soldiers in quest of him, and the monks were barbarously persecuted because they would not betray him, nor tell where he lay concealed.

Through the sides of St. Athanasius, the Arians slyly directed their arrows against the Church itself. His condemnation and removal from Alexandria, so eagerly pursued, was only a preparatory step towards their impious design. Not to leave the important see of Alexandria without a bishop, they procured the consecration of a man, who, they thought, would answer all their purposes. It was one George, an obscure Cappadocian, who had been a victualler to the army, without education, and without learning, brutish and cruel by nature, a Christian only in name, and a heathen in his heart. No sooner was this sacrilegious intruder seated in the patriarchal chair, than conformably with his imperial master's will, he began and continued to persecute the Catholics with every kind of violence, of which Gregory, his Arian predecessor, has given the example, as Theodoret relates. At Constantinople likewise the persecution was carried on with equal fury by Macedonius, the Arian, whom Constantius had made bishop in place of St. Paul. Many had the honor of dying for their faith.

Besides this general havoc made among the faithful followers of Jesus Christ, the Church had to deplore the fall of two of her first champions, Osius and Liberius. At

three different times a certain number of Arian bishops had met at Sirmium, the metropolis of Illyricum, and had drawn up three different formularies of faith. The first, dated in the year 351, contained no heresy, it neither approved nor rejected the errors of Arius, was therefore of a suspicious nature. The two others, bearing a later date, openly embraced the Arian and Semiarian heresy. To Osius, now past the hundredth year of his age, who had hitherto acted so distinguished a part in defence of the Catholic faith, the second formulary was proposed by the order of Constantius for his acceptance. The venerable prelate rejected it with scorn; he was put on the rack; pain subdued his exhausted courage, weak nature yielded, he signed the Arian formulary, and communicated with Ursacius and Valens. This passed at Sirmium and gained him his liberty. Covered with disgrace, he immediately retreated to his own church of Cordova, in Spain. There, in the spirit of a true penitent, he protested against the violence that had been offered him at Sirmium, publicly anathematized the Arian heresy, and exhorted all the world to reject it. He spent the short remains of life in devoutly preparing for death, which happened within a year after, as St. Athanasius assures us.

Pope Liberius had passed two years in banishment at Beræa, when hard sufferings and deceitful reasoning began to shake his resolution. The continual solicitations of Demophilus, the Arian bishop of Beræa, seconded by the delusive arguments of Fortunatian, the temporizing bishop of Aquileia, at length induced him to believe, that he might sign the first formulary of Sirmium, and the condemnation of St. Athanasius, without violating the Catholic faith. He signed both. The fall of so great a prelate is a terrifying instance of human infirmity; to the faithful it caused both

grief and scandal. Liberius fell through weakness, and by an error of judgment: but he fell not into heresy; much less did he approve or teach it. His declaration, however, against St. Athanasius, was a grievous prevarication against justice and truth; it furnished subject of malignant joy to the Arians; it procured the emperor's leave for the guilty pontiff to return to Rome. During his exile, the Arian faction had thrust one Felix into the Pontifical Chair; Constantius proposed that both of them should govern with equal power. But the people with one universal voice exclaiming, *one Christ, one fold, and one Pastor*, he found the opposition too strong to be resisted without risk, and Felix, the Antipope, was driven out of Rome. If Liberius fell like St. Peter, he also rose like him by a speedy repentance. No sooner had he recovered his See, and his liberty, than he loudly declared himself the patron of justice and truth, wrote letters of reconciliation to Athanasius, reprobated the doctrine of Arius, and by his active zeal averted the desolation, with which that heresy threatened many churches in the west, as Theodoret testifies in his history.

The tyranny which Constantius had exercised for some years past over the consciences of his Catholic subjects, not being followed with the success he wished, the wicked agents and advisers of his persecuting plans, Ursacius and Valens, suggested to him the convocation of a general council, under the authority of which they hoped to accomplish their end by setting aside the Nicene Creed, and introducing a new one. Constantius relished the advice, and in the year 359 summoned a council to meet at Rimini, a town in Italy, near the Adriatic. By his sole authority, and at his expense, there assembled accordingly four hundred bishops, of whom eighty were Arians: Liberius, the Pope, seems to have taken no part in it. But Taurus, prefect of

the Pretorian bands, assisted with positive orders to see that the emperor's intention should be fulfilled. The Catholic bishops assembled in the church, the Arians in an adjoining place, which they made their oratory; for the two parties no longer prayed together. The Arians brought with them an equivocal profession of faith, which they had previously settled among themselves, and which the emperor was determined to have signed by the council. The terms employed in this formulary to express the nature of the Son of God, were scriptural indeed, but susceptible of a Catholic or an Arian sense by construction. The word *Consubstantial* being purposely discarded, it is clear in what sense Valens and his associates meant it should be understood. It was no sooner read than rejected by the Catholic prelates, who unanimously decreed, that no deviation from the decisions of Nice, and no new formulary was to be admitted. They pronounced anathema against Arius, against his doctrine, and against his adherents. Three hundred and twenty bishops subscribed this decree, eighty refused. On these eighty, the council passed sentence of excommunication and deposition, as abettors of heresy. Thus far the Catholic prelates had been free and allowed to act according to the dictates of conscience. Could they then have departed, all would have been well, and Arian malice would have been defeated.

But Constantius was bent on carrying his point. Though at a distance in the east, where his presence was judged necessary to check the progress of the Persian arms, he received regular information of all that passed at Rimini. On finding a more obstinate opposition to his scheme than he had expected, he directed Valens, his prime agent, to exert all the talents he was master of to gain the bishops, and renewed his orders to the prefect Taurus, not to let

them quit Rimni till they signed his formulary. The council was now reduced to a state of captivity. The Catholic prelates deputed ten of their number to make remonstrances to the emperor on the violence done them. The Arians deputed the same number of their party. These, who were in collusion with the emperor, obtained all they wished; those obtained nothing, not even a civil reception. They were not in the court secret. They thought the council had fully answered the purpose of its meeting, and till then had no suspicion of the emperor's impious design, when he called them together. The Arian deputies returned triumphant; the Catholics labored under every irksome hardship. Nothing was left untried to shake their constancy. For seven months they remained inflexible and unanimous. Some of them began to relent, though firmly resolved not to resign their faith. But their listening to deceitful men, made a breach in their first resolution, through which the spirit of darkness and deception entered amongst them. Valens, in the name of his party, solemnly assured them, that he differed not from them in belief, that he objected to the term *Consubstantial* only, because it was not in the text of holy Scripture. He added, that there was no probability of the emperor's suffering them to visit their respective flocks, unless they first subscribed his formulary, and that on their subscription depended the peace and union of Christ's Church. By these specious declarations, which they thought sincere, the Catholic prelates were unfortunately deceived, and fancying the doctrine of *Consubstantiality* to be sufficiently expressed in other words of the context, joined the hypocrites in signing the captious formulary.

The mischief was now done. The bishops were permitted to depart; not being conscious of having intended

any thing wrong, they were greatly surprised to hear their act every where construed into an approbation of the Arian heresy. The surprise which the bishops expressed at hearing themselves charged with Arianism, is a clear proof that they never thought of signing any thing contrary to faith: nor in fact were they guilty of an error in their belief. But they were guilty of an error in agreeing to the loose manner of expressing their belief, and thereby furnished matter of triumph to their enemies for the moment. Sensible then of their error and their weakness, they began to feel remorse, and by professing the Nicene Creed, endeavored to repair the scandal they had given by their unwary condescension. Their improvident act was no sooner known than reprobated by Pope Liberius, and the dispersed bishops of Italy, of Spain, of Britain, of Gaul, of Dalmatia, of Greece, of Africa, of the Islands, and with a few exceptions of all the oriental Churches which steadily adhered to the Nicene Creed, as St. Athanasius testifies in his letter to the emperor Jovinian. The acts of the council of Rimini, thus rejected by the Church, in the first instance, have so remained ever since.

Constantius, having carried his point at Rimini, in the violent manner we have related, published a strict order that all bishops, to retain their rank, that all magistrates and officers, to be qualified for service, should sign his new formulary, and hold communion with the Arians. This is the first religious test that ever was enacted to qualify for civil employments; it was enacted by an Arian despot, who was yet no Christian; it required that every magistrate and public officer to testify his fidelity to the state, should, by an act of infidelity, prove himself a traitor to Jesus Christ, his God and Saviour. Shocking to

Christian piety is the idea, that such a test ever should have been invented or ever imitated.

SECTION XVI.

Julian, the Apostate.

(A. D. 361.) CONSTANTIUS, who had passed some time with his army in the East, was returning to Constantinople, when he fell sick in Cilicia. Finding the fever increase, and his life in danger, he sent for Euzoius, the Arian bishop of Antioch, and by him was baptised a little before his death. On the third day of November, 361, Constantius died as he had lived, in the profession of Arianism, after a tyrannical and inglorious reign of twenty-four years. Leaving no issue behind him, he was succeeded in the empire, by Julian his cousin-german, the son of Julius Constantius, Constantine's half-brother.

Julian, surnamed the Apostate, was about thirty-one years of age when the troops in Gaul proclaimed him emperor during the life of Constantius. He received his first education under the noted Arian Eusebius of Nicomedia, who admitted him to minor orders among the clergy of that church. Being afterwards sent to complete his studies at Athens, he contracted a close intimacy with Maximus, and other noted adepts in the black art, by whom he was initiated in the superstitious practices of divination and heathen astrology. He publicly wore the dress and affected the stern deportment of a philosopher. In his discourse and academical disputations he ever betrayed a strong propensity for the Pagan worship, and though he still professed

himself a Christian, was privately in fact a heathen. As soon as vested with sovereign power, he threw off all disguise, renounced the Christian name, underwent a superstitious lustration of blood in order to wash out, if possible, the sacred character stamped upon his soul at baptism, publicly professed himself a Pagan, and by law established the Pagan system over the whole Roman empire. Notwithstanding these notorious facts of determined apostacy, Mr. Gibbon, in his florid but romantic history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire, gravely tells his readers, that Julian "very narrowly escaped from being a bishop, and perhaps a saint;" as if in this author's idea a bishop or a saint were something worse than an apostate. Mr. Gibbon knew by experience what an apostate was, though not to the wide extent of Julian.

But to fill up the vacancy made by Julian's narrow escape from being a Saint, the same dashing writer has gratuitously bestowed that honor on George, the Arian bishop of Alexandria. "The infamous George of Cappadocia," says he, "has been transformed into the renowned St. George of England, the patron of arms, of chivalry, and of the garter." He dares not say by whom this wonderful transformation has been made. It is in fact a forgery of the Calvinistical school, fabricated by Jurieu,* adopted by Echard, and transcribed by Gibbon. The flourishing Mr. Gibbon first tries to let his readers understand that the transformation of George, the Cappadocian, from a persecuting Arian into a Catholic Saint and martyr, was a mere device of the Catholic party to swell their religious calendar; then conscious, as it seems, that he had advanced more than could be proved, he subjoins in a corrective note,† "that this transformation is not absolutely certain, but as

* Apol. de Reform.

† V. 2, p. 404.

extremely probable. This fancied probability of his is certainly no great compliment either to his reader's judgment or his own. To a reader of the least discernment can it appear extremely probable, that George of Cappadocia, a noted Arian, the usurper of St. Athanasius' See, a bloody persecuter of the Catholic faith, a miscreant universally detested for his immoral character, and at last massacred by a Pagan mob for his extortions and crying injustices, could be ever set up by Catholics as an example of virtue, and honored as a saint and martyr by the Christian world? To confirm the vulgar and erroneous notion that Catholics pay divine worship to the saints, Mr. Gibbon has taken care to say, in his sarcastic narrative, that the worship of St. George was introduced into the bosom of the Catholic Church by those sectaries, the Arians. Other stories, equally fabulous, were formerly published by the Arians of the great St. George, who is the patron of England, and suffered for his faith a glorious martyrdom under Dioclesian, full fifty years before the infamous George was thrust into the See of Alexandria. The authentic acts of this Saint's martyrdom not being clearly ascertained, the Arians spread many apocryphal relations of him, as well as of other Saints, with a view of depreciating their memory, which after a due examination were condemned and proscribed by Pope Gelasius I., in the year 494.

Julian, even after his accession to the throne, affected a philosophic moderation in his general conduct of life. He encouraged moral virtues, reformed the extravagant profusion of expense in the imperial court, and permitted the banished bishops to return to their respective churches. This act of grace he extended equally to Catholics and Arians, not from any good will that he bore to either, but

with a view, as Ammianus, his own historian, writes, of casting an odium on the memory of his tyrannical predecessor, and of undermining the Christian Church, by fomenting quarrels between the two parties. Nothing less than the total abolition of Christianity, and the re-establishment of idolatry, was the object of his detestable ambition: and this he calmly undertook to do, while he seemed to grant the Christians full liberty to practice their religion. For he neither unsheathed the sword, nor published any sanguinary edict against them. But by pecuniary impositions, by vexatious suits and insults, he cruelly oppressed and persecuted them. He stript the clergy of their privileges: he drove St. Athanasius again from Alexandria, because he took possession of the great church without his express leave: the pensions granted by Constantine for the support of churchmen, of virgins, and widows, he suppressed, as he sarcastically said, to teach them the practice of evangelical poverty: he forbade them to plead or to sue for justice in any court of judicature, alleging, that lawsuits were not permitted them by the principles of their religion: he, in fine, shut up their schools to deprive them of all literary knowledge, saying it was sufficient for a Galilean (so in contempt he called the Christians) to live in ignorance and to believe with blind simplicity. He exacted from them large contributions for the reparation of his heathen temples, demolished many of the Christian churches, and converted the sacred plate to Pagan uses. This, in many places, was not done without violence and bloodshed. In Cappadocia, in Syria, at Antioch and Gaza, many suffered tortures and death for their religion.

The apostate's animosity against all revealed religion, put him upon the mad project of rebuilding the temple and

ancient city of Jerusalem. He had read the holy Scriptures, and knew the prophecies that had been uttered concerning their ruin and final desolation. With a view of falsifying the inspired writings, and of giving the lie to his Redeemer, Julian, by letter, invited the Jews from every quarter of the globe, to come and concur with him in a work which flattered their most ardent wishes. He ordered the materials to be brought at his own expense, and appointed Alypius, one of his most intimate friends, to superintend and hasten the undertaking. Numbers of experienced workmen crowded to the spot. The old foundations of the former temple were dug up in a short time to make room for the new, and then was completely verified our blessed Saviour's prediction, that not one stone should be left upon another. The trenches were now open, the foundation stones were at hand ready to be laid next morning, the Jews began to triumph, when during the night, a sudden earthquake filled up the trenches, scattered abroad the materials, overturned the adjacent buildings, and buried many of the workmen under the ruins. This stroke astonished, but did not deter the Jews from prosecuting the work, which they wished to finish. Then from the bowels of the earth burst forth a flaming torrent of fire, which, continuing to flow, made it impossible for any one to approach the place without being consumed. The miraculous stream ceased at times, but began to flow again the moment any one attempted to approach.

Then was the obstinacy of the Jews overcome, and infidelity was compelled to own the sovereign power of God who governs the universe, whose decrees no device of men can frustrate, and no force resist. The impious attempt that was made to falsify his divine word, by the ineffable disposition of his providence, verified it to the very letter. Jews

and Gentiles confessed the divinity of Jesus Christ; many, on conviction, yielded to the force of truth, and embraced the Christian faith. Julian, in confusion, was obliged to abandon his wicked project, but remained obdurate, as Pharaoh, in his infidelity. The miraculous interposition of God on this occasion was visible to all; Christians, Jews, and Gentiles concur in attesting the fact. St. Cyril, the bishop of Jerusalem, saw and laughed at the impotent undertaking. Its circumstances are related by Ammianus Marcellinus, the honest Pagan, as Mr. Gibbon styles him, a cotemporary writer, whose hatred of the Christians, and admiration of Julian, place his testimony above all exception.

Julian, all this while, was making vast preparations for war against Sapor, the inveterate enemy of Rome. Not content to act upon the defensive, as Constantius had done, he put himself at the head of his army, and improvidently entered the enemy's country, where he had every disadvantage to contend with. But divine justice was hastening to overtake him for his apostacy. The Persian troops unexpectedly fell upon him on the march; he received a mortal wound from a dart, and died the next day, in the thirty-third year of his age, after an impious reign of about twenty months.

SECTION XVII.

Valens, the Arian Emperor.

(A. D. 370.) THE death of Julian left the Roman army in the heart of a hostile country, without a leader, without provisions, without supplies, in danger of perishing by famine, or the sword, or of being trodden down by elephants. In this perilous situation, the officers of the army saw the necessity of putting themselves under the command of some one chief, vested with an authority to direct and provide for their common safety. They assembled and unanimously agreed to confer, not only the command of the army, but the purple likewise, upon Jovian, commander of the Pretorian band, a noble Hungarian and a steady Christian. Julian had tried to make him an apostate like himself. Resign your charge, said he one day to him, or offer incense to the gods. Jovian instantly ungirded, and presented his sword; but Julian knowing his merit, and unwilling to lose the service of so brave an officer, refused to receive his resignation, and bade him keep his sword.

By artful contrivances the imperial apostate had betrayed many of the army, both officers and men into acts of idolatrous worship. Jovian thought no good could come from men who stood guilty of such an abomination, and therefore hesitated for some time, whether he should accept the crown or not. But on the loud assurance of the troops, that notwithstanding the temporizing prevarication of many, all were Christians in their hearts, he submitted to their choice, was enthroned and proclaimed emperor. The first exertion of his talents was to extricate the legions from their present difficulties, which he did by a masterly retreat,

and with safety gained the Roman territory. He then concluded a peace, which, even on hard conditions, he judged to be more advantageous to the empire than a war without the means or prospect of success against the superior power of Persia.

Jovian having thus guarded the state by treaty against the attacks of Persia, next turned his thoughts on repairing the havoc done to religion. The persecuting philosophy of Julian, and the fierce contention of jarring sectaries, of Arians, Semiarians, Macedonians, and Donatists, had spread desolation through the church, especially in the East. These, with petitions in their hands, beset the throne to solicit the protection of the new emperor. To them all he made this one answer, that he was the protector of the Catholic faith as set forth in the great Council of Nice. Religion, during the last and the foregoing reign, had suffered a temporary eclipse; it now began to shine forth with fresh brightness. The anti-christian decrees of Julian were annulled, the heathen temples were shut up, and no more bloody sacrifices were allowed. The Catholic bishops regained possession of their respective Churches, and the former pious grants, made by Constantine, were revived. By these religious acts, joy was painted in the looks of all good men, when in a moment they were plunged into the deepest grief. Jovian, in good health the evening before, and in vigor of life, was found dead in his bed, suffocated, as it is supposed, by the smoke of charcoal, which had been lighted to dry the walls of his room.

After an interregnum of ten days, the unanimous voice of the army raised Valentinian to the throne. Valentinian was a Hungarian of singular merit, had held a high office under Julian, till disgraced for his attachment to the Catholic faith. The frontier of the empire in the west being

attacked by barbarous invaders, and the east being ever exposed to new troubles, he thought himself not equal to the arduous task alone, and therefore divided the burden and the honor of governing with his brother Valens. To him he committed the charge of the East, while he himself undertook to defend the West.

Valens had scarce taken up the reins of government, when, declaring himself an Arian, he began to renew all the horrors of persecution, which had been exercised by Constantius. Eudoxus, the Arian bishop of Constantinople, by whom he had been recently baptised, absolutely governed and directed him in all his violences against the Catholics. By the advice of that vindictive churchman, a severe order was given, under the imperial seal, for all those bishops, who had been banished by Constantius, to be driven back into exile, and to be replaced by Arians. This edict appeared in 367. Then was St. Athanasius compelled, for the fifth time, to withdraw from Alexandria and the fury of his persecutors. But his faithful flock, dreading the renewal of Arian cruelties, forced the governor to solicit the emperor for his return. The emperor did not choose to risk the resentment of a city, so populous as that of Alexandria, by a refusal. Athanasius then, after having concealed himself for four months in a vault, where his father lay buried, took possession of his church again, which he continued to govern with full liberty till his death, in 373. The same fear in Valens of irritating the people into a revolt against his government, procured the like indulgence to some other populous cities. But, in other places, where the tyrant had nothing to apprehend, threats, insults, imprisonment, confiscation of goods, banishment, and capital executions were promiscuously employed to effect his design, which was to establish Arianism over the whole east. The solitaries of

Egypt even could not escape his rage: many of them were barbarously massacred by his soldiers, many dragged from their cells and forced to serve in his armies. Providence permitted him thus to ravage the Church for some years, when, in 378, severe justice overtook him. A barbarous horde of Goths had invaded Thrace; he led an army against them, he fought and lost the battle, in which he was wounded by an arrow: he took refuge in a neighboring cottage, the Goths set fire to it, and he miserably perished in the flames, as is generally believed.

SECTION XVIII.

Theodosius, Emperor.

(A. D. 380.) VALENS dying without issue, the empire of the east devolved upon his nephew Gratian, the son of Valentinian. Valentinian had been dead three years, and left behind him two sons, Gratian and Valentinian II. The latter was a child only four years old at that time, but being proclaimed emperor by the army, Gratian, who had attained the sixteenth year of his age, readily acquiesced in the nomination, and shared the empire with him. Valentinian, their father, was a professed protector of the Catholic faith, but being beguiled by Severa, his Arian wife, and weakly yielding to the smooth discourse of Auxentius, bishop of Milan, he suffered this false pastor to teach and propagate the impious errors of Arius. Whether with the advice of this Arian, or of some heathen courtier, he passed a law, the most unaccountable in a Christian emperor, which made it lawful for a man to have two wives at once, of which he

himself set the example, by putting away his wife Severa, and marrying Justina, the fair widow of Magnentius, while Severa was still living. Valentinian was of a very warm and irascible temper. In one of those violent transports of anger, to which he was frequently subject, he burst a blood vessel, fell speechless back into the arms of his attendants, and suddenly expired, in 375, leaving behind him two sons, Gratian by Severa his first wife, Valentinian II., and three daughters by Justina, his second wife.

Gratian had completed the sixteenth year of his age, and succeeded his father in the western empire; he consented to divide it with his half-brother Valentinian, an infant only four years old, whom the German army had proclaimed emperor by the contrivance of his mother Justina. Upon the death of his uncle Valens, in 378, he also inherited the sceptre of the east, a splendid but too weighty burden for a prince, who had not yet finished his twentieth year of life. Wise policy directed him to look out for an experienced colleague, endowed with vigor and talents, to aid him in the government of a declining empire, attacked on all sides by the incursions of fierce and powerful barbarians. Such a man he found in Theodosius, who had served with honor in Africa, and was then reduced to a private station in Spain, on account of his father's unmerited disgrace, when Providence called him forth to share the purple with his sovereign. Theodosius was in the thirty-third year of his age, lineally descended from the emperor Trajan, whose good qualities he inherited in an ample degree without his defects. To great natural abilities he added great military skill, and a thorough knowledge of mankind. From the general opinion, already entertained of his superior talents, sprung an universal joy at his promotion. In his subsequent conduct he proved himself worthy of the throne, to which the

wise and political generosity of Gratian raised him : a series of brilliant and successful actions merited him the surname of Great. Gratian ceded to him the whole Roman territory of the east, contenting himself with half the west, while his brother Valentinian enjoyed the other half.

The first year of Theodosius' reign was marked with victories, which put an end to the Gothic war, and cemented a solid peace with the Persian monarch. After that, he informed himself of the general state of religion throughout the east ; he found that Arianism, like a wild boar, had spread desolation far and wide through the vineyard, but nowhere more than in the imperial city of Constantinople, which, at that time, did not allow the Catholics so much as a single church for divine service. Being at Thessalonica, the capital town of Greece, he was visited with a serious sickness, which he patiently received as a warning from God to prepare for death. He sent for Ascolus, the bishop of the town, humbly asked and received baptism from his hand. For, through an abuse or neglect, which seems to have been frequent in that age, Theodosius was not yet baptised, though educated and well instructed in the Catholic faith. As if the waters of baptism had produced a salutary effect upon his body, as well as upon his soul, he speedily recovered. Grateful for the grace he had received, he immediately began to exert his zeal for the suppression of those blasphemous insults so long and so publicly offered to the divinity of Christ, his God and Saviour. He published an imperial edict, dated February the 28th, 380, in which he made known his will to the people of Constantinople, that all his subjects should steadily adhere to that faith, which St. Peter once taught at Rome, which Damascus, his successor, then professed, and which, through that channel, had been faithfully delivered down to them. "Conformably

to this apostolical tradition, which contains no other than the express doctrine of the Gospel, let us believe," says he, "the sole Deity of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, under an equal majesty, and a holy Trinity. It is our pleasure that the followers of this doctrine bear the title of Catholic Christians; all others, in our opinion, being no better than extravagant madmen, we brand with the disgraceful name of Heretics, and we declare that their conventicles or meeting-houses shall no longer assume the appellation of churches."

The term Catholic, which is taken from the Apostles Creed, is here sanctioned by imperial authority to distinguish the followers of Christ's genuine doctrine from the swarming sectaries, who had newly started into life, and propagated their own fancies for gospel truths. The gospel truths are those alone which Christ has taught, which the Apostles preached, and which the Church, ever faithful to her trust, inviolably preserves. Whatever religious doctrine springs not from this sacred source, is a new and false doctrine, a doctrine unknown to the first teachers of Christianity. All doctrine that is not founded in truth, is always upon the change, it alters its form, and varies its language according to the whims of men. Arianism, in the space of a few years, underwent no fewer than sixteen changes in the sixteen different formularies of faith, which its discordant teachers exhibited to the world.

Theodosius passed the summer at Thessalonica, and in November repaired to Constantinople, for the purpose of putting his edict into execution. He sent for Demophilus, the bishop, whom the Arian party had translated from Beræa to Constantinople, and proposed to his free choice either to embrace the Catholic faith, or to quit the See of Constantinople. The stubborn Arian chose the latter, and

went back to Beræa, where he died six years after. The See of Constantinople, being thus vacated by the resignation of Demophilus, the orthodox clergy and laity unanimously called upon the celebrated Gregory Nazianzen, to replace him. Gregory, for his profound erudition, surnamed the Theologian, was a native of Nazianzum, in Cappadocia. His father was also called Gregory, who, four years after his conversion to Christianity, was made bishop of Nazianzum, in 329. Some carping critics, ever ready to asperse the celibacy of bishops, and to insult the authority that ordains it, have ventured to assert, though without proof, that the younger Gregory was born after his father was promoted to the episcopacy. But from his writings, from his age, and other circumstances of his life, it is evinced that he was born, even before his father was baptised, as Baronius and F. Stilting, the Bolandist, clearly show. He was qualified with all the polite learning of the age, which he had acquired in the celebrated schools of Cæsarea, in Palestine, of Alexandria, and Athens. In this latter place, he had Julian, the apostate, for his fellow student, and by what he saw in his irregular comportment, prognosticated what mischief the empire was then breeding up in that capricious prince. Here he contracted a virtuous and lasting friendship with the great St. Basil, by whom he was afterwards ordained bishop for the See of Sasima, in Cappadocia, but never could take possession. His natural inclination ever led him to a studious and solitary life. In his beloved retirement at Selucia, he received the pressing solicitations from Constantinople, for him to come to the assistance of that desolated Church. After much persuasion, he at length consented. Theodosius, in spite of the Arian faction, put him in possession of the Cathedral church of St. Sophia; and all the other churches of that city, upon the expulsion of the Arians, were likewise given back to the Catholics.

SECTION XIX.

Second General Council.

(A. D. 381.) It could not be expected, that at the sound of an emperor's voice, men should immediately resign the religious opinions to which they had been long attached by education, by habit, by prejudice, by party, and perhaps by principle. Something more persuasive than an imperial edict, nothing less than an authentic declaration of the Church, was required to dispel the clouds of error, and display the splendid truths of revelation. Notwithstanding the light that shone forth in the sanctity and learning of an Athanasius, of a Hilary, of a Cyril of Jerusalem, of a Basil the Great, of the two Gregories, Nazianzen and Nyssen, a general confusion of doctrine for the last forty years, under the baleful influence of Constantius and Valens, had pervaded the east. Constantinople, the new seat of power, was become the receptacle of every error and of every vice that had been lavishly imported from every province of the east. Arianism was at variance with itself: its irascible teachers had violently quarrelled among themselves about the terms and object of their belief: some stiffly maintained an inferiority of nature in the Son, some warmly contended for a substantial likeness, others for a relative likeness only; but all agreed in denying the, Consubstantiality of the Son of God. From this anti-trinitarian principle sprung up another heresy, which denied the divine procession of the Holy Ghost. The author of this heresy was Macedonius, whom Constantius thrust into the See of Constantinople, as mentioned above, in the room of St. Paul. He held that see for twenty years, when an Arian faction pushed him out to make place for Eudoxus, a

more popular zealot. The Macedonian error had rapidly spread through Thrace, Bithynia, and the Hellespont, and had seduced many from the path of truth.

To remedy these evils, so inimical to the welfare of both church and state, Theodosius sent letters of invitation to all the bishops within his imperial jurisdiction, to assemble at Constantinople in the month of May, 381. A hundred and fifty Catholic bishops, besides thirty of Macedonius' followers, met at the time appointed. Their expenses were defrayed by the emperor in a style not less magnificent than that displayed by Constantine upon the Fathers of Nice. The Council was opened with a religious solemnity, St. Meletius, the venerable patriarch of Antioch, presided; Theodosius assisted in person. The first subject of their consideration, was the election of St. Gregory to the See of Constantinople, which they confirmed. The Macedonian or Semiarian bishops, being called upon to subscribe to the Nicene Creed, abruptly quitted the assembly. Meletius unexpectedly died, St. Gregory then presided. At that juncture arrived the bishops of Egypt and Greece. These prelates not being on very good terms with the orientals, showed their displeasure by objecting to the translation of St. Gregory Nazianzen, to the See of Constantinople, contrary to an ancient canon. The humble prelate, perceiving some disagreement was likely to ensue on his account, thought himself obliged in charity to reply, that the canon alluded to had lost its force by long disuse, that were it even in force, it could not regard him, who had never taken possession of the See of Sasima, to which he had indeed been ordained; that at Nazianzum he had only acted as vicar to his aged father, and consequently had never been translated from one See to another. "But if my holding the See of Constantinople," says he, "gives any uneasiness,

behold I am willing, like Jonas, to be cast into the sea to appease the storm which I have not raised. This dignity I neither sought nor desired; I submitted to it much against my will. Discharge me only from the heavy burden, I shall with joy return to my little cottage, that you may remain united, and the Church of God enjoy peace. Let your choice for my successor fall upon the person who is capable and willing to defend the faith. I desire nothing more." Having said this, he abruptly left the assembly, to the astonishment of all, and repaired to the palace: there, falling upon his knees before the emperor, he earnestly requested his Majesty's consent to resign his episcopal charge for the sake of peace. The emperor, for some time, struck with astonishment at so unusual a request, at first refused, but at last, with apparent reluctance, gave his assent. St. Gregory, then master of himself, hastened to the Cathedral, and from the pulpit, in a florid discourse, took a final leave of the Council and of his flock.

Upon the cession of St. Gregory, Timotheus, the bishop of Alexandria, presided in the Council till a successor to the vacant See of Constantinople was appointed. Nectarius, a Roman senator, was elected, though he had nothing to recommend him to so important a charge but his gray hairs, his worldly rank, and a graceful figure, without learning, without talents, without elocution, and without experience. He was not even baptised. Strange as the nomination was, Theodosius and the Council approved it; but as if a further sanction was requisite in so singular a case, deputies were despatched to Rome to procure letters of confirmation from Pope Damasus. Damasus was the successor of Liberius since the year 366. Nectarius in the interim received baptism, went rapidly through all the degrees of ordination, was seated in the episcopal chair of

Constantinople, and presided in the latter sessions of the Council.

The Council of Constantinople followed the example of that of Nice, in pronouncing decisively upon the controverted points of faith, and in forming some canons for the regulation of ecclesiastical discipline. Of these canons, the most remarkable is that which erects the See of Constantinople into a metropolitan See over that of Heraclea, which had hitherto enjoyed that privilege, and gives it rank even above that of Alexandria next to Rome. This privilege the Council granted to Constantinople, in consideration of its being the emperor's fixed residence, and the oriental seat of empire. The Fathers of the Council would admit no other than the Nicene Creed, which they confirmed as fully expressive of the Catholic faith against Arius; but because some new errors had been broached since that time by Apollinaris against the humanity of Jesus Christ, and by Macedonius against the divinity of the Holy Ghost, and by other false teachers against the Church, they judged it necessary to add a more explicit declaration of what the Church had always believed respecting those articles. "I believe in the Holy Ghost," is all the Council of Nice had said concerning the third Person of the blessed Trinity: the Council of Constantinople speaks the same belief in more explicit terms. "I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Life-giver, who proceeds from the Father, who, with the Father and the Son, is equally adored and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets. I believe one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church."

Theodosius received these decisions of the Council, as spoken by God himself, and enacted a law to enforce the execution of all its decrees. This Council, if we consider only by whom it was called, and of whom it was composed,

appears to be no more than a partial Council, since none of the western empire were either invited or assisted at it. But as its decisions in matters of faith were afterwards confirmed by the Pope and received over all the west, it has been ever reckoned a general Council by the Catholic Church.

SECTION XX.

Usurpation of Maximus.

(A. D. 383.) WHILE the Church thus triumphed under Theodosius in the east, the empire underwent a sad revolution in the west. The storm burst from Britain. Maximus, who is said to have been a Briton by birth, and vested with a senatorial rank at Rome, received an invitation from some leading men in Britain to come and reside among them. Being nearly related to Constantine the Great, by his father's side, as Matthew of Westminster relates, and having acquired great popularity during his military command in the island, he carried his ambitious views much too high to be satisfied with a subordinate station. Soon after his arrival in Britain, he married the daughter of Octavius, whose influence and sway were very powerful in the country, and assumed the title of King. He had his eye on the imperial crown. The weakness of Gratian's government, and the discontent of the Roman legions favored his pretensions. He made no secret of his design; eager to share in the spoils of victory, the British youth, to the number of a hundred thousand, it is said, crowded round his standard. With these he crossed the sea into Gaul, where

he had little more to do than to march and conquer. He took possession of that part called Armorica, from whence he expelled the ancient inhabitants, and parcelled it out among his followers: these gave it the name of Little Britany, which it retains to this day. Their language descended with their posterity; it is the old British, and with little variation, the same now spoken by the Welsh. Maximus vigorously pursued his first good fortune, lost no time in slow deliberation, but pushed rapidly on to come up with Gratian. Gratian, a meek and virtuous prince, had neither the means nor resolution to cope with the hardy and skillful Maximus. Betrayed by his ministers, and abandoned by his army, he had no other hopes of safety but in flight. With a few attendants he strove to reach Italy, but was overtaken at Lyons, by some rebel emissaries, who basely murdered him, in the year 383, the twenty-fourth of his age.

On the death of Gratian, Maximus, without further contest, entered into peaceable possession of all Gaul, Spain, and Great Britain, the whole of Gratian's share in the western empire. He fixed his residence at Treves, and assumed the title of emperor, which Theodosius, through necessity, was compelled at that time to acknowledge and admit. There, with dignity and at his ease, he might have enjoyed his ill-gotten empire, did ambition only suffer her slaves to know when and where to stop. The restless conqueror stretched his look beyond the Alps and Mediterranean sea; he grasped at the other half of the western empire, Africa, Italy, and the islands subject to Valentinian. Valentinian was only twelve years old, under the guardianship of his mother Justina, who, with a feeble hand, held the reins of government. Alarmed at the threats of an enterprising warrior, whose avowed intention was to dethrone her son, she consulted her ministers. They

advised her to try the means of negotiation, and recommended to her the superior abilities of Ambrose, the bishop of Milan, as the only person likely to succeed in so difficult an undertaking. The recommendation was a wise one, but unpleasant to Justina, who was at variance with the bishop on the subject of religion. Justina was an Arian; there were many Arians in Milan; she insisted upon having one of the churches in the city assigned over to them. The bishop, as his duty to God required, positively refused his assent; she thought herself grievously injured, and seized every opportunity of showing her resentment. To become at once an humble suppliant to the man whom she hated, and by whom she thought herself slighted, was a humiliation which the spirited Justina could not well submit to. But the critical state of the empire left her no alternative. Maximus was bent on war; she had no troops to oppose him. Ambrose, in a former embassy, had obtained a truce. she now entreated him to exert his talents once more, and to avert, if possible, the fatal blow that was levelled at her son and the whole imperial family. The virtuous prelate, on the principle of duty to Valentinian his sovereign, readily undertook the commission, and immediately set off for Treves, with full powers to negotiate a peace. There he found Maximus immoveably fixed in the resolution of dethroning Valentinian. Upon an ambitious rebel who had imbrued his hands in the blood of Gratian, his lawful sovereign, no remonstrances, no entreaties, no arguments, though urged with all the force of persuasive eloquence, made the least impression. Maximus dismissed the bishop, and set forward on his march towards Italy. The formidable appearance of his troops, pouring down the Alps upon the plains of Italy, cast Justina and the court into the utmost consternation. She waited not for the enemy's

approach; she retreated with her son and daughters across the Adriatic into Illyricum, and put herself under the protection of Theodosius. Theodosius received her with that open generosity which was natural to him, promised her assistance as soon as he should be in a condition to give it, and then being a widower, married her daughter Galla, as a pledge of his sincerity.

SECTION XXI.

Victories of Theodosius.

(A. D. 388.) THEODOSIUS was not prepared for war; but motives of gratitude and compassion towards an injured family, to whose liberality he stood indebted for his share in the empire, prompted him to take such measures as he judged requisite to chastise the daring insolence of an usurper. His exchequer was empty, and money was necessary, which could not be raised without taxes. The people murmured; war with a distant power was unpopular. The citizens of Antioch, in a riot, threw down the statues of Theodosius and Flaccilla, his late empress, and dragged them through the streets with loud huzzas of insult and contempt. Theodosius was justly irritated, and being naturally of a warm temper, doomed the guilty city, in the first transport of his anger, to destruction. Being left to himself, he grew cooler by reflection, and sent two commissioners to take cognizance of the cause. The rioters, now sensible of their guilt, threw themselves upon the emperor's clemency. Flavian, their venerable bishop, appeared at the court of Constantinople in the garb of an

afflicted supplicant for a penitent people. Being introduced into the emperor's presence, and allowed to speak, he dissembled not the heinousness of the crime into which his flock had been unwarily betrayed; then, in a pathetic strain of sacred eloquence, he enforced the motives of Christian forgiveness with such energy, that the emperor melted into tears of compassion for a deluded multitude, and granted them a full pardon.

The victory gained by Theodosius, on this occasion, over himself, was a prelude to that which he soon after gained over Maximus. Being provided with a gallant army, ready for action, he marched against the tyrant, defeated him in two battles, surprised him at Aquileia, and took him prisoner. When he saw the suppliant captive, prostrate at his feet, he sorely felt for his misfortune, and probably would have spared his life, had not the more vindictive officers who were present, hurried the miserable man away from the emperor's tent, and put him instantly to death by cutting off his head. By the fall of Maximus, the tyrant or the emperor, as he is styled by turns in history, Theodosius became master of the whole western empire. But increase of territory or of power was not the wish of that generous conqueror. Content with the glory, he bestowed the fruit of his victory on Valentinian. He bestowed a favor still more valuable to him as a Christian, by procuring him instruction in the true faith of Christ, from which his Arian mother had hitherto debarred him.

Theodosius spent three years in Italy; during that time an unfortunate riot happened at Thessalonica, in which the governor of the city lost his life. The account provoked the emperor's anger to a violent degree; he denounced severe punishment against the whole city. St. Ambrose undertook to reason with him, and by persuasive arguments

soothed him into the humor of forgiveness. Here the matter might have ended, if courtiers had not interfered. These officious men took an opportunity of representing to their sovereign that ill-timed clemency was an encouragement for his subjects to insult him, that no riots at Thessalonica would have happened, if those at Antioch had not been pardoned, that exemplary punishment, in fine, now became necessary to secure the public peace. Upon these representations, Theodosius gave a secret order that a certain number of the Thessalonian citizens should be executed to expiate the murder that was committed amongst them! The order was executed in the following manner. When the citizens were assembled, as usual, in the circus, to see the public games, an armed body of soldiers suddenly fell upon them, and without distinction of age or sex, of innocence or guilt, cut to pieces as many as seven thousand. St. Ambrose, with great grief, but with zeal becoming his character, represented to the royal murderer the enormity of his crime, and refused to admit him within the Church, till he performed a regular course of canonical penance for the same. The bishop spoke with the spirit of Nathan, and the monarch humbly submitted with the penitential sentiments of David.

In November 391, Theodosius, crowned with victories over himself and Maximus, returned to Constantinople. He had not been there many months, when behold, to his great surprise, an ambassador appeared from one Eugenius, whom a sudden revolution in the west had placed upon the throne of Valentinian. This amiable and inoffensive prince, in the twenty-second year of his age, being desirous of receiving baptism from the hand of St. Ambrose before he entered Italy, had despatched a messenger to Milan, for the bishop to meet him at Vienne, in Gaul. But the villainy of

Arbogastes, the general of his army, prevented his receiving that holy sacrament of régénération. This man was a heathen, by birth a Frank; he had assumed an insolent ascendancy over his meek sovereign, and could brook no control. He had long insisted upon a renewal of certain privileges, formerly annexed to the Pagan worship, which the emperor absolutely refused to grant. Upon this, the exasperated Frank resolved his death, and among the guards found traitors ready to execute his bloody design. These miscreants having watched the time when the unsuspecting Valentinian was alone in the garden of his palace upon the banks of the Rhone, suddenly rushed forth and strangled him. They hung up the dead body by his own handkerchief, twisted round his neck, that the world might think he had himself committed violence upon his own life. St. Ambrose had advanced as far as the Alps in his way to Gaul, when he received the melancholy account. He poured out a flood of tears upon the spot, and returned with a sorrowful heart to Milan. There he celebrated a solemn mass for the repose of his murdered sovereign's soul, and pronounced his funeral oration, in which he hesitates not to say that the earnest desire of the deceased, to receive the sacrament of baptism, supplied the want of it, and promises always to remember him in his sacrifices and prayers.

Arbogastes, raised by fortune above the reach of public justice, then usurped the power without the title of emperor; he chose to reign, but not in his own name. He set the crown upon the head of Eugenius, one of his own devoted creatures, who had acted as secretary of state to the late Emperor. Eugenius was a man in some repute for learning and eloquence, but totally void of principle and religion; he was a favorer of paganism. Theodosius scorned the

friendship of a man who had mounted into the throne over the dead body of his murdered brother-in-law. He sent back the usurper's envoy, and declared war against him. Having implored the aid of heaven by fasts and public prayer, he displayed the banner of the Cross, and marched his army into Italy. His enemy advanced to meet him with vaunting confidence, under the standard of Hercules. Both armies came in sight of each other near Aquileia: a bloody battle ensued; victory hung for some time in suspense, but turned at length in favor of the imperialists. Eugenius fell into the hands of the conqueror, and paid for his usurped dignity by the loss of his head. This decisive victory put Theodosius, a second time, in possession of the whole Roman empire, which no one sovereign has held since.

That incomparable prince had now reached the summit of his earthly glory. A holy hermit of Egypt prophetically admonished him that his end was near. He held himself in watchful readiness to receive the awful summons. In the following year, 395, he fell sick at Milan, and piously expired in the arms of St. Ambrose, after a prosperous and religious reign of sixteen years. By his will he divided the empire between his two sons, Arcadius and Honorius. To Arcadius, who had attained the eighteenth year of his age, he bequeathed the east; to Honorius, only ten years old, he bequeathed the west, under the administration of Stilico, an experienced statesman, and a good general. By all writers, excepting Zosimus, the sworn enemy of Christianity, Theodosius is represented as a perfect pattern of public and private virtue, worthy of the imitation of all Christian princes. His exemplary conduct, during the stay he made in Rome, moved many of the heathen senators to embrace the

Christian faith. St. Siricius, the successor of St. Damasus, then presided over the whole Church. St. Anastasius succeeded him in the year 398.

SECTION XXII.

View of the Fourth Century.

(A. D. 398.) FROM the time of Constantine's conversion, Christianity received the imperial sanction, and became the religion of the empire. The terrors of persecution no sooner ceased, and men were left free to follow the dictates of reason, without risking their civil rights, than multitudes of every rank and profession eagerly listened to the voice, and embraced the comfortable doctrines of divine truth. The altars of idolatry no longer smoked with incense, or with the blood of slaughtered victims. The Pagan temples were either shut up or pulled down, magnificent churches, for the Christian worship, rose in every province, from the eastern to the western bounds of the vast Roman empire. Nations differing in climate, in language, and in manners, agreed in their belief of the same religious tenets, and though formed into many particular congregations and ecclesiastical divisions, for their better instruction under their respective pastors, yet all being united by one and the same bond of faith, as members of the same mystical body of Christ, they composed one universal Church, under one visible Head, the bishop of Rome, the successor of St. Peter, the chief of the Apostles, and vicar of Jesus Christ. Such was the hierarchy and spiritual constitution of Christ's

Church in the fourth century ; such as it was from the beginning, it still is, and will always be to the world's end.

Before her civil establishment under the Christian emperors, the Church chiefly depended on the alms and pious liberalities of the faithful for her temporal support. But, in the fourth age, she began to be possessed of fixed revenues for the use of her altars, for the maintenance of her clergy, for the relief of her poor, of her orphans and widows, under the protection of imperial laws, enacted by Constantine, by Jovian, by Valentinian, and Theodosius. These imperial grants contributed to her temporal encouragement, to her ornament and comfort ; but they were not essential to her existence. She had existed for three hundred years without them ; she increased, she flourished, and she triumphed over all the efforts that were made to depress and destroy her. The apostate Julian stript her of all temporal privileges ; she triumphed still in spite of him. Some other apostate may, with equal violence, throw her into the like state of desolation, she will still remain unshaken and secure upon the Rock on which her divine Founder built her.

Strange dogmatizers attacked her faith, and in succession strove to adulterate her doctrine with their new conceits. Arius impugned the divinity of the Son of God, Apollinaris contended that Jesus had no soul, Photinus asserted him to be no more than a pure man ; Macedonius denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost. Jovinian, who had exchanged the abstemiousness of his monastic profession for the luxuries of a worldly life, advanced erroneous positions against the merit of fasting, as well as against the superior excellence of virginity over the engagements of matrimony. Donatus set up his schismatical chair at Carthage, against that of St. Peter at Rome, and contended that the true

Church of Christ was exclusively confined to his sect. Against these monsters of the fourth century the Church raised her voice, and their blasted errors fell, by degrees, like blighted fruit to the ground. In vain did those bigoted tyrants of the east, Constantius and Valens, endeavor to establish Arianism on the ruins of Catholicity : the venerable bishops of Rome, Liberius and Damasus, without alms and worldly power, defeated their impotent attempts ; and if Liberius, through human weakness, made a temporary slip, he quickly recovered himself, as soon as free, to renew the combat with fresh resolution. The tyrant's power vanished with his life ; his memory is in execration. But the decisions of the Church in the two œcumenical Councils of Nice and Constantinople, will retain their full force, and command respect to the end of time.

When the young reader of ecclesiastical history meets with these decisions of Councils in the Church, he must be careful to remember that the Church, by such decisions, enacts no new article of faith, she only declares what has been revealed to her from the beginning ; in more explicit terms, she then announces to the faithful what she always believed, though not so openly expressed. The watchfulness of her pastors was such that no new doctrine could be broached without being perceived by them. Whenever any new doctrine began to spread and disturb the Church, they assembled to examine and proscribe it, if found repugnant to the ancient practice and belief. By those means the primitive doctrines of the Apostles were preserved fresh in the memory of the living generation, and faithfully delivered to the rising race : by those means the true sense of Scripture, as at first understood, was clearly ascertained, and the unity of faith effectually secured. Destitute of this advantage,

the Arians soon began to vary in their doctrine and formularies of belief, they split into different factions, and from one heresy fell into another, as we have seen in Macedonius, and shall, hereafter, have occasion to remark in all sectaries, when they have once started from the centre of unity.

In this fourth century flourished many holy and enlightened men, vigilant pastors of the flock, and eminent doctors of the Church. There was St. Athanasius bishop of Alexandria, St. Gregory Nazianzen, no less renowned for eloquence than for holiness of life. St. Basil the Great, bishop of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, his brother St. Gregory, bishop of Nyssa, St. Cyril bishop of Jerusalem, St. Hilary bishop of Poitiers, St. Epiphanius bishop of Salamina in Cyprus, St. Ambrose bishop of Milan, St. Damasus bishop of Rome, with his learned secretary St. Jerom. The repute which these venerable Fathers of the Church have ever had, both for knowledge and virtue, leaves no room to doubt the truth of their evidence respecting the doctrines that were taught and believed in their days. For of these doctrines they are not only the witnesses, but the very teachers. Being always upon the watch against all novelty, as history informs us, they believed nothing, and they taught nothing, that was new; nothing but what was primitive and delivered to them by their Catholic predecessors. In this age, say the Centuriators of Magdeburg, the face and form of the Church was fair and bright. Clear, indeed, must be the evidence, which could draw so neat a concession from these devoted proselytes of Martin Luther. What were the doctrines then, and what were the virtues, which rendered the face of the Church so fair, and her form so bright? Let the writings of these Fathers be consulted, not in the spurious editions, which stand exposed for the inspection of common

readers, slashed and mutilated by some falsifier's pen, but in those genuine editions which lie undisturbed, it seems, in certain academies, covered over with dust, and concealed from the young student's sight under lock and key. These genuine works of the Fathers, who lived in the fourth age, faithfully unfold the self-same doctrines, which the Catholic Church has invariably believed and taught through every subsequent age to the present, viz. the Unity and Trinity of God, the Incarnation and Divinity of the co-eternal Son of God, the Divinity of the Holy Ghost, the pure oblation of the Mass, the real presence of Christ's Body in the Holy Eucharist, auricular Confession, the invocation of Saints, prayers for the faithful departed, the merit of fasting, and practice of the three religious vows of voluntary poverty, chastity, and obedience.

CENTURY V.

SECTION I.

Alaric, King of the Goths.

(A. D. 401.) THEODOSIUS, by his military achievements, had recovered the declining glory of the Roman empire; by the abolition of Pagan rites he gave an exclusive sanction to the Christian form of divine worship: but by the final division he made of the east and west, between his two minor sons, Arcadius and Honorius, he disjointed that union of power, which should have concurred for the preservation of the whole. Constantine had already lessened the strength of the west by drawing no small part of it to his new city of Constantinople, which he founded in the year 330. But at the death of Theodosius, in 395, the west received an irreparable diminution of strength, when two distinct empires were formed out of one, and a jealous rivalry of interests and power was established between the two. From the earliest times, the Greeks and Romans were never cordially united. If the Romans had learned to value the arts and eloquence of Greece, they continued to despise the effeminate and fickle temper of the people: and if the Greeks revered the arms and military genius of Rome, they had not yet forgotten the sentiments of hatred and contempt, which their polished ancestors had ever entertained for the rude inhabitants of the west.

The imperial majesty of Rome was now upon the decline, the Roman legions were no longer considered as the defence of the empire. Mercenary troops of Goths, of Huns, and

Vandals, collected from the banks of the Vistula, from the east and north of the Danube and Euxine sea, were taken into pay to fight the battles and to garrison the towns of Christian emperors. Alaric, the noted chieftain of the Goths, had learned how to fight and how to conquer in the camp of Theodosius against Eugenius. Rufinus, whom Theodosius had raised from an obscure corner in Gaul, to the post of high chamberlain at Constantinople, contributed his share to the disgrace and misfortunes of the empire. To a bold and ready elocution this base-sycophant owed his first rise: and artful cunning in concealing the most atrocious crimes under the cloak of affected piety gained him the confidence of his sovereign. The favor he enjoyed at court, inspired him with a vain presumption that in the appointment of every office of trust he ought to have the preference. He then thought himself disgraced by the preference which Theodosius, in his last will, had given to Stilico. To make himself amends for this fancied disgrace, he planned a matrimonial connection between his own daughter and the young Arcadius. But Rufinus had enemies at court, and by their secret contrivance his project failed. Arcadius gave his hand to Eudoxia, the fair daughter of Bauto, a general of the Franks in the service of Rome.

Upon this, the disappointed Gaul sought revenge at the expense of the empire. He formed a close friendship with Alaric, the Gothic chief, by whose aid he seems to have flattered himself with the hope of being able to mount the throne of Constantinople. To bring this project to bear, it was necessary to raise a quarrel between his sovereign and Alaric, who had hitherto been faithful in the imperial service. Rufinus knew that the ambitious Goth wished to have the command of the imperial troops; he instigated him to ask for it, which he foresaw would be refused, and

that war would be the consequence. So it happened. Alaric, on meeting with a refusal to his request, boldly erected his independent standard, and commenced hostilities. The signal of war being given, innumerable swarms of savage combatants flocked to his banner from the forests of Scythia. There was no army to oppose him, he had but to march and conquer. To sit down before the impregnable walls of Constantinople, and to attempt its reduction by a regular siege, would be losing time; he hastened to reap a plentiful harvest of fame and riches in the fields and towns of Greece. His march was accompanied with all the outrages of barbaric war. The fertile plains of Thessaly, of Macedonia, and Attica, were laid waste, the cities plundered, the inhabitants ruined and dishonored. Uncertain how far these scenes of desolation might be carried, and compelled moreover by the cries of his defenceless subjects, the weak Arcadius proposed terms of accommodation. The terms were advantageous to the conqueror, and accepted. An imperial edict, published at Constantinople, proclaimed Alaric master-general of the eastern Illyricum. His followers gave him the title of king.

SECTION II.

Alaric invades Italy.

(A. D. 402.) ALARIC, emboldened by success, and having an army at his devotion, resolved to push his fortune. The bare name of king, without the power, did not content him. Italy tempted his ambition. Thither he led his savage followers, all soldiers of fortune like himself, with a firm

resolution of finding there a kingdom or a grave. Stilico, at the head of a gallant army, which he had hastily drawn together, was ready to receive him. Two bloody battles were fought; the Goth retreated with disgrace, Stilico had the honor of a triumph. The Roman general had scarce time to breathe, when a more formidable invader from the north called him again into the field. From the borders of the Baltic a barbarous horde of confederate adventurers, known by the name of Vandals, Sueves, Alains, and Burgundians, to the number of two hundred thousand fighting men, with as many women and children, spread desolation far and near in their way to Italy under the command of Rhodogast, or Rodagaisus. They met with no opposition in their march, till they reached Tuscany. Florence had the courage to shut her gates against them. They laid siege to the town, which gave Stilico time to collect a few troops together. In the open field his little army must have been overpowered by numbers. He prudently declined a pitched battle; he sought to reduce them by small attacks, and by intercepting their convoys, in which he luckily succeeded. Partly by famine and partly by the sword he cut off more than one third of their numbers; to the rest he opened a retreat. They gladly seized the opportunity, and thereby delivered Italy from present ruin. Like a swarm of devouring locusts, they took their course along the eastern side of the Rhine, and in the winter, when the river was frozen over, they marched across the ice, and entered the defenceless provinces of Gaul. That rich and extensive country, as far as the ocean and the Alps, thus became a prey to those savage rovers. Those barbarians, equally strangers to religion and humanity, and being under no restraint, massacred thousands of Christians, in cold blood, to possess their property.

But Italy was still doomed to be ravaged by barbarians. Alaric appeared again with loud complaints and insolent demands, on the pretence that his Goths in the imperial army were ill treated, and his services but ill requited. He insisted upon being put in possession of one of the western provinces. Stilico, for that time, silenced him with a sum of money, which, with much difficulty, he persuaded the senate to grant. This was the last subtle act of that subtle statesman. His enemies construed it into an act of partiality for the Goths, and accused him of a design to place his Pagan son, Eucherius, upon the throne of Honorius, by the help of a Gothic ally. How far he was guilty, the variety of opinions upon the subject makes it difficult to determine. But an imperial order for the seizure of his person was obtained and executed. He was taken and beheaded upon the spot without any form of trial. Stilico had incurred general odium by his conduct, so fell unpitied. But by his fall the state lost its firmest prop, and Alaric was delivered from the only antagonist he had to fear in his projected scheme against Rome. For to sack that proud city, and to enrich himself with the spoils of Italy, was the object which that Gothic king kept constantly in view. He had now considerably increased his army with fresh recruits, whom the expectation of plunder drew to his standard: he waited only for a fair pretext to re-commence the war. That pretext, the court of Ravenna soon furnished, by not paying him the stipulated sum, as the Senate and Stilico had promised. Ravenna was a strong city upon the Adriatic coast, where the weak and timid Honorius had now fixed his residence, as a place the most secure against any hostile attack.

Alaric now began to march; he passed the Alps and the river Po, then directing his course along the Adriatic coast,

and pillaging the unfortified towns that lay in his way, rapidly advanced through the country without opposition, and pitched his camp under the walls of Rome. The trembling Romans hoped their strong walls would shelter them, till troops should come to their relief. No troops were near, and all communication with the country being intercepted by the enemy, they soon began to feel the dreadful effects of famine and pestilence. They had no resource but in the clemency of a barbarian. The Senate deputed two of their body to treat with him. With great difficulty he was at last prevailed on to grant a suspension of arms, on condition that a certain sum of money was immediately paid him. The sum was enormous, and could not be raised but by melting down the gold and silver statues of the gods that were still in being. Thus, by the disposition of an all-directing Providence, a Gothic adventurer became instrumental to the final abolition of Idolatry in Rome.

Alaric retired into Tuscany for the winter, during which he entered into a negotiation for peace. But the court of Ravenna not meeting him on the terms he expected, the conferences were broken off, and he marched again to Rome. The dread of a second famine induced the senate to propose a peace on any terms that his Gothic majesty might choose to impose. Alaric, upon this, drew back his troops, and held out to Honorius fresh offers of peace. But his offers were received by the imperial ministers with such disdain, and answered in so lofty a style, that he resolved to take a severe revenge. Burning with resentment and the thirst of plunder, he led his army, for the third time, to the walls of Rome. It was the year four hundred and ten. Treachery opened to him the Salarian gate: a host of Goths poured in like a torrent, and in the first transport of victory set fire to some houses. A general pillage then took place,

and saving the two churches of St. Peter and St. Paul, which the tyrant ordered to be spared, Rome, the mistress of the west, experienced for three days, all the outrages and all the horrors which a savage soldiery, stimulated by passion, and licensed by martial tyranny, was capable of perpetrating. On the sixth day, Alaric led forth his Myrmidons to ravage the rest of Italy. He carried devastation through the country, as far as the utmost point of land in Calabria, where death put an end to his career. The Gothic troops chose Ataulph, his wife's brother, for their king and leader. Ataulph, with sentiments of humanity, beheld the devastation made by his predecessor, and resolved to give peace to Italy. He entered into a treaty of friendship and alliance with Honorius, who disdained not to give him Placidia, his sister, in marriage, as a pledge of future amity between them. The peace of Gaul was sacrificed to cement this extraordinary alliance between a Gothic adventurer and the son of Theodosius. The brother-in-law of Honorius, led off his wandering host to seek a residence in Gaul. Thus, within the space of a few years, unnumbered tribes of rapacious strangers, the honorable friends of the Roman empire, as they were called, the Goths, the Vandals, the Burgundians, and the Franks obtained a permanent establishment in those fertile provinces, and the disinherited natives were forced to relinquish, with a sigh, the rich possessions of their ancestors. Ataulph settled the kingdom of the Visigoths in Aquitaine and Languedoc, making Toulouse his capital.

SECTION III.

St. John Chrysostom.

(A. D. 407.) FROM the sack of Rome, we turn back to view the scenes that were going on at Constantinople. There, Arcadius, the degenerate son of the great Theodosius, wore the imperial purple, but wicked agents directed the wheels of government. Not possessed of one manly virtue, that unsteady prince betrayed as much weakness in abandoning, as he showed imprudence in choosing his favorites. Upon the fall of Rufinus, sprung up the infamous Eutropius, who, during his short administration, is noted for no one laudable deed, but that of promoting the election of St. Chrysostom to the See of Constantinople. Pride and extortion quickly brought on the downfall of this detestable minister, by the hand of Gainas, the commander in chief of the auxiliary Goths.

St. John, surnamed Chrysostom, from his golden eloquence, was a native of Antioch, born in the year 347. Trained from his early years to piety and learning, he became eminent in both. To ground himself in the principles of solid virtue, he passed three years under the direction of St. Meletius, bishop of Antioch, and four among the holy anchorets, who had their solitary cells in the neighboring mountains of that city. A dangerous illness obliged him to quit the damp abode of a hermit, and return to Antioch. St. Flavian, the successor of Meletius, ordained him priest in 386, and made him his preacher. The piety, the zeal, and eloquence that he displayed in the discharge of his ministerial duties, rendered his name famous, not only in Syria, but over all the east. His merit was known at the court of Constantinople; on the death of Nectarius in 398,

Arcadius wished to see him placed in that patriarchal See, and, at the suggestion of Eutropius, his chamberlain, secretly contrived to have him conveyed thither with that view. John himself had no previous knowledge of the contrivance, nor suspicion even of the honor intended for him. Theophilus, the proud and turbulent bishop of Alexandria, was already at Constantinople, trying, by illegal practices, to traverse the canonical election, and to promote a creature of his own. His intrigues were detected, and to his confusion, he was forced to consecrate the man whom he had so unjustifiably opposed.

It was to a post of difficulty and labor, rather than of honor, that St. John was now promoted. He found the imperial city defiled with vice, and the dregs of Arianism. Through the incapacity or neglect of his predecessor, many irregularities prevailed among the clergy, the reform of which engaged his first attention, and procured him much odium. The luxury of a corrupt nobility, the indecency of female dress, the oppression of the poor, the neglect of religious duties, and a general licentiousness of manners, opened a spacious field for the laborious and eloquent exertions of his pastoral zeal. All admired the elegant and easy flow of his language in the pulpit, but the glowing colors in which he painted the deformity of vice, offended many who felt themselves guilty, but not inclined to profit by the truths they heard. The intemperate Eudoxia, whose avarice and injustice knew no bounds, as Zoximus, a heathen historian, tells us, considered the bishop's reprehension of public vice as a personal affront, and vowed revenge. She undertook to depose him, and had unfortunately the power in her hands. For, since the disgrace of Eutropius, she governed her husband Arcadius and the empire with an absolute sway.

In Theophilus, the intriguing prelate of Alexandria, Eudoxia had a tool at her service, every way qualified for the work she had undertaken. He had already exhibited strong proofs of his talents for persecution, by his violent proceedings against four respectable abbots of Nitria, called the tall brothers, harmless tenants of the desert. She knew how cordially he hated the holy bishop of Constantinople. She sent for him; he promptly obeyed her call, glad of the opportunity to concur in the deposition of a venerable brother, whose promotion he had not been able to prevent. He landed at Constantinople in June, 403, with several Egyptian bishops in his train. Agreeably to his instructions from the empress, he got together a cabal of six and thirty bishops, all enemies of St. John, and repaired with them to the town of Chalcedon. They assembled in one of the churches there, calling themselves the Synod of the Oak, which grew near, and gave name to that quarter of the town. A list of accusations, false and frivolous in themselves, was produced, and sentence of deposition, in a summary manner pronounced against a metropolitan bishop, over whom they had no jurisdiction and no canonical power whatever. St. John at the same time had convened a legal synod of forty bishops to justify his conduct, in not submitting to the cabal sitting at the Oak. But this did not screen him from the determined violence of his enemies.

Theophilus sent the iniquitous sentence he had dictated at Chalcedon to the emperor, who, at the instigation of Eudoxia, signed and issued an order for the banishment of his slandered bishop. The people, showing a disposition to resist the order, the submissive prelate privately withdrew, lest his stay might occasion a riot in the city. The night after his departure, a violent earthquake shook the town: conscience awoke in the breast of Eudoxia at the shock. In

the utmost consternation she ran to Arcadius, crying out "Our empire is undone, if John be not recalled." The emperor readily consented; she wrote, that very night, letters full of pretended friendship and esteem to the venerable exile, begging him to return with all speed. He returned amidst the joyful acclamations of the people; his enemies disappeared; he resumed his pastoral functions with the same intrepid zeal as before; Eudoxia grew furious again; fright had only checked, not extinguished the desire of revenge, which still fiercely burnt within her breast. She called her episcopal cabal together. These mitred mercenaries took up the cause on fresh ground; they urged a canon which had been fabricated in an Arian synod, held at Antioch, under the direction of Eusebius of Nicomedia, against St. Athanasius; the import of this Arian canon was, that no bishop, deposed by a synod, should recover his See, till restored by another synod. On this false plea they solicited and obtained, from the weak Arcadius, a second order for the banishment of a man whose only crime was the faithful discharge of his pastoral duty. The order was executed by military force on holy Saturday; soldiers were sent to drive the bishop and his people out of the church, which was not effected without tumult and bloodshed. The name of John was then struck out of the list of Catholic bishops, and an intruder thrust into his episcopal chair by imperial authority.

The oppressed prelate, judging his cause to be that of the Church, appealed to the common father of the faithful, Innocent, the bishop of Rome, and immediate successor of St. Anastatius. St. Innocent exerted himself with vigor in the cause of justice: he directed that a free convocation of bishops should assemble upon the spot, and decide conformably to the canons, which had been enacted by the

Council of Nice, for the termination of such controversies. In a free assembly, the schismatics knew they had no chance, and therefore resolved to prevent its meeting; for they had the power in their own hands. The weak Arcadius listened to none but Eudoxia and her court sycophants, who, on every occasion, usurped his name and authority to serve their own wicked purposes. Eudoxia fixed upon Cucusus, a poor town in Armenia, near mount Taurus, for the place of the bishop's banishment, hoping that ill-treatment and the length of the journey might put an end to his life, and satiate her revenge. In that she was for once disappointed. The Saint arrived in good health, and received every consolation and kind service from the bishop and inhabitants of the place for near three years, that he was permitted to remain amongst them. When his implacable enemies were apprised of the respect there shown him, they procured an order for his removal to Pityus, a town on the Euxine sea, near Colchis, at the extremity of the empire. Two brutish officers were sent to conduct him thither, within a limited time, through inroads, with a promise of promotion, if, by hard usage, he should die in their hands. They executed their commission with savage fidelity. They hurried him on, though sick, sometimes through heavy rains, and sometimes under a scorching sun, till they came to Comana Pontica, in Cappadocia. There exhausted nature sunk under the weight of accumulated sufferings. He lodged in the oratory of the priest who served a chapel there, in which lay the relics of St. Basiliscus, formerly bishop of the place, and martyred for his religion. During the silence of the night, the blessed martyr appeared to him, and said: "Be of good courage, to-morrow we shall be together." The holy confessor felt himself exceedingly comforted, though reduced to the last

extremity of weakness. In the morning he received the holy Eucharist, spent the short remains of life in fervent prayer, which he concluded with his usual act of thanksgiving to God for all things, then having said Amen, and signed himself with the sign of the cross, he placidly expired on the fourteenth day of September, 407. His remains were interred, with great respect, near the body of St. Basiliscus.

SECTION IV.

Theodosius, the Younger, and Pulcheria.

(A. D. 408.) THE death of St. John Chrysostom, was followed within eight months by that of his persecutor Arcadius. The sharp throes of child-bed, which lasted with exquisite pain for four days, put an end to the life and crimes of Eudoxia four years before. The whole period of Arcadius' reign, and he reigned full thirteen years, has not furnished a single action that denotes the son of the Great Theodosius. Arcadius left a son, known by the name of Theodosius, the Younger, and three daughters, Pulcheria, Arcadia, and Marina: all three, by vow, consecrated their virginity to God. Theodosius, in the eighth year of his age, began his reign under the administration of the sage and steady Anthemius, the admirer and friend of St. Chrysostom. Pulcheria, who, for her superior talents, for her eminent piety and prudence above her age, may be justly styled the glory and wonder of her sex, directed the education of her two sisters, and of the emperor, her brother, two years younger than herself. She procured

him the most qualified masters of the east for his instruction in grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy; she wisely introduced into the palace several noble youths, for the sake of exciting, by their example, a laudable emulation in her brother for study and improvement; she had other masters to teach him the military exercise, the art of riding and shooting with the bow. She considered these accomplishments not absolutely requisite, but highly proper and graceful in a prince who ruled over an extensive empire. Her principal care was to have him well grounded in the principles of solid piety and true religion, as necessary to true honor and everlasting happiness. Thus educated, Theodosius, for many years, filled with dignity the high station he was born to. Though weak and indolent by nature, he was by principle and habit chaste, temperate, liberal, and beneficent. On the noble motive of gratitude, he conferred upon his incomparable sister, at the age of sixteen, the title of Augusta, and shared with her the imperial prerogatives of his crown.

Of all the descendants of Theodosius, Pulcheria seems to have been the only one that inherited any portion of his manly spirit and abilities. For near forty years she governed the eastern empire with glory to herself and advantage to the state. She commanded respect both at home and abroad. The laws were observed, or duly vindicated, if transgressed; justice was administered with an impartial hand. Never did religion or the empire shine with greater lustre than when Pulcheria sat at the helm of government. Through her discernment, the imperial council was composed of persons of the most upright, the most wise, and the most experienced that the east could produce. In matters of importance she never took any resolution, but with their advice, and after mature deliberation. Her

orders were then positive, the execution prompt and vigorous, though always in the emperor, her brother's name, to whom she humbly and discreetly gave the whole honor. Her private practices of devotion, for which she had her fixed hours, never diverted her attention from the public good. In Pulcheria, the piety of a Christian virgin was adorned with the glowing virtues of an empress. Mistress of the Greek and Latin languages, she wrote and spoke them both with fluency and elegance.

Theodosius had attained the twentieth year of his age, when Providence, in a manner the most singular, presented him with a royal consort. A fair and virtuous maiden, the daughter of Leontius, a heathen philosopher of Athens, came to Constantinople. She came to obtain redress from the whimsical testament of her late father, who had bequeathed the whole of his rich patrimony between her two brothers, leaving her but a small legacy, on the odd pretence, that for his daughter, beauty and learning was a sufficient fortune. Athenais, for that was her name, having asked and obtained an audience, gracefully flung herself at the feet of Pulcheria, and, in moving accents, related her mournful tale. Pulcheria listened to her eloquent complaint, and being charmed, both with her person and manner, resolved, upon the spot, to make her the consort of Theodosius. Her choice was readily acceded to by the parties principally concerned. Athenais renounced the errors of paganism without reluctance, was duly instructed in the Catholic principles of faith, and baptised. She took the name of Eudocia, and gave her hand to the young emperor, amidst the joyful acclamations of the capital, in the year 421.

SECTION V.

Schism of the Donatists.

(A. D. 411.) For near a century, the church of Africa had been miserably desolated by schism, which, in the beginning, appeared to be no more than a little spark, but, by the intemperance of party, was at length kindled into a mighty flame. To trace the evil to its source, we must look back to the eleventh year of the foregoing century. Upon the death of Masurius, bishop of Carthage, the neighboring bishops assembled, without waiting for those of Numidia, to choose a successor; their choice fell upon Cecilian, a deacon of Carthage; the approbation of the people was universal, and he was consequently ordained bishop. Two ambitious clerks were disappointed by the choice, and began to call the validity of his election into doubt. They laid their complaints before the bishops of Numidia, who were not a little piqued at their not being summoned to assist at the election. Donatus, a turbulent prelate, and an enemy of Cecilian, put himself at their head, and drew seventy discontented bishops together in the city of Carthage, to discuss the point, whether the election and consecration of Cecilian were canonical or not. They decided in the negative, passed sentence of deposition against Cecilian, and elected Majorin to the See of Carthage. Cecilian referred his cause to Melchiades, the bishop of Rome, by whom, after a thorough discussion, he was pronounced duly elected. His opponents would not acquiesce, but appealed to the emperor, Constantine, though not yet a Christian. Constantine, by an imperial decree, supported the Pope's decision, and a numerous Council, held at Arles in 314, solemnly confirmed it.

But the sturdy Donatists were not disposed to submit. In defiance of all authority, they formed themselves into a separate congregation, and, on the death of Majorin, elected one Donatus to succeed him. This Donatus gave the name of Donatists to his party, and is different from him of the same name, mentioned above. Under the guidance of this hypocritical bishop, they completed their schismatical system. To schism they added heresy, asserting that God the Son was less than the Father, and greater than the Holy Ghost, that the Church of Christ had failed, and was to be found only amongst them, that no where but with them existed any true virtue, any baptism or other sacraments. Their numbers soon swelled into a formidable faction, animated with the most violent hatred against the very name of Catholic. Their insolence and audacity increasing with their numbers, they denounced open war against the Catholics, took possession of their churches, by main force, drove away their clergy, profaned the sacred vessels, and overturned the altars: and what is still more horrid to relate, they laid their sacrilegious hands on the Holy Eucharist, which had been consecrated by the Catholic priests, and gave it to the dogs. Their rage, at times, so far carried them beyond the bounds of reason, that it seems to have bordered upon downright madness. On the wild notion that baptismal grace could no otherwise be conferred than through the hands of a Donatist, they induced some, by dint of opportunity, and compelled others, by tortures, to receive the form of a second baptism.

These outrages had been continued, with more or less violence, from the middle of the fourth to the beginning of the fifth century. The Catholic clergy, in their defence against them, employed no other arms than those furnished by the Gospel, exhortation and patient suffering. But on

men, hardened in iniquity by sacrilege and bloodshed, words had no effect. The infection spread from Carthage through Numidia and Mauritania to such a degree, that the Donatists, in numbers, surpassed the Catholics. They reckoned above five hundred bishops of their sect; there scarce was a town in Africa, which had not two bishops, a Catholic and a Donatist. The turbulent spirit of the latter rendered the restraint of prohibitory laws necessary to preserve the tranquility of the state. Some, for their seditious practices, were fined, others banished. But the severity of laws was even too weak to restrain the enormities of a sect, which, by principle, had thrown off all respect for lawful authority. The meek ministers of the Gospel, with St. Austin at their head, persisted in a softer mode of conciliation; they wished to remove, rather than punish the errors of the deluded multitude. They proposed the mode of conference, and in a national council of all Africa, held at Carthage, in 403, the Catholic prelates agreed to invite the Donatist bishops to a public conference, in order to discuss the articles which divided one party from the other. The Donatists rejected the invitation, till Honorius, by a rescript, dated in 410, compelled them to accept it.

Carthage was the place appointed for the rendezvous: the conference began on the first of June, 411: the numbers were two hundred and eighty-six Catholic prelates, and two hundred and seventy Donatists. By mutual agreement, seven bishops were chosen on each side to argue the controverted points, four notaries to take down the acts in writing, with four bishops to superintend them, and fourteen other bishops, seven on each side, to act as council to the disputants. To this select committee was left the management of the conference, which lasted three days under the protection of Count Marcellinus, commissioned by Honorius

to see due order observed. The defenders of Donatus omitted nothing that art and sophistry could devise in support of a bad cause. St. Austin, the learned bishop of Hippo, and one of the seven Catholic disputants, in a very satisfactory manner, answered their objections, exposed their sophisms, refuted their arguments, and from authentic records proved the election and ordination of Cecilian, the capital point of controversy, to have been canonical. By demonstrative arguments he then proceeded to show his adversaries, that nothing could justify them in separating from the Catholic Church, although Cecilian had been even guilty of the charge brought against him; that no crime, however enormous, of one individual member, could affect the whole body; that the Catholic Church was the only Spouse of Christ, inseparably united to him, and that an attempt to break this union must be a crime of the first magnitude; that the Church of God was not confined, as they erroneously contended, to a narrow corner on the coast of Africa, but was spread according to divine promise over all the earth; that among her numerous children she comprised indeed very opposite characters, an aggregate of good and wicked men; but although we are forbidden to communicate with the wicked in their evil ways, that we were not to break off all external communication with them on that account. The conference ended by Marcellinus pronouncing sentence in favor of Cecilian, as far as related to the matters of fact which had given rise to the schism. Honorius confirmed the sentence, the effect of which was, the triumph of truth and the gradual extinction of schism.

SECTION VI.

Pelagianism.

(A. D. 412.) **IGNORANCE**, and the fear of being persecuted by the party, had hitherto been two principal causes, which held many of the Donatists in schism. But those causes being now removed, the one by a clear statement of the truth in the late conference, and the other by the recent laws of Honorius, they returned in crowds within the pale of Catholic communion. The privilege, also, of retaining their rank, granted to those schismatical bishops who should publicly abjure their errors, induced many to reconcile themselves with their mother Church. Some, indeed, remained obstinate, but their number and their consequence were too insignificant to disturb the public peace. It was the misfortune of Africa, at that time, to send forth a second brood of false teachers, the cause of fresh troubles and affliction to the Church. The Donatists had not yet wholly disappeared, when the Pelagians crawled into light. Pelagius, the progenitor of this new sect, was by birth a Briton, by profession a monk, of Bangor in Wales, possessed of no great learning, but not deficient in genius. He quitted his cloister and travelled to Rome, where he remained for some years, and grew into some repute. The character he bore, of a learned and virtuous monk, opened to him an epistolary correspondence with St. Austin and St. Jerom. From his letters, these holy men soon discovered his real character; under the mask of piety, they disclosed a depth of hypocrisy, and under an imposing language, frightful errors of doctrine, against which they judged it necessary to caution the faithful.

The errors of Pelagius, in doctrinal points, were congenial with the inbred pride of his heart. He denied the existence of original sin in the soul of man, and rejected the necessity of divine grace for the merit of good works, contending that Adam, by sinning, only hurt himself, and that his descendants are now born in the very same state they would have always been, had he never sinned. Doubtful of the reception which these new doctrines might possibly meet with, he ventured not to assert them openly at first, but warily tried the public mind by employing his disciples, of whom Celestus was the chief. This man was a subtle, smooth-tongued Scot, who had formerly pleaded at the bar, and afterwards made himself a monk. The errors they taught were not of their own invention; they imbibed them from a dogmatizing Syrian, named Rufinus, with whom they became acquainted at Rome. Rome being threatened by Alaric, they left Italy and sailed for Carthage, where they arrived in 411. Pelagius made but a short stay, and embarked for Palestine. Celestus remained there in order to procure ordination, and to disseminate his wicked doctrines. A charge of heresy was preferred against him. St. Aurelius, the bishop of Carthage, assembled a council of bishops in 412. Celestus was cited to appear before them, and to answer the accusation that was brought against him. On his confession he was clearly convicted of heresy, condemned and excommunicated. He appealed to the Apostolic See, but instead of pursuing his appeal he went to Ephesus, where he had the address to get into priest's orders.

Pelagius, during this time, was in Palestine, laboring under a similar accusation of holding erroneous doctrines. In December, 415, a synod of fourteen bishops met at Diospolis, known in scripture by the name of Lydda. They

cited Pelagius before them, to give an account of his faith. A list of propositions, extracted from his writings, was produced against him. He began his defence by endeavoring to wipe off the suspicion entertained of his orthodoxy; and to do away the bad opinion which his judges might have conceived of him, he read to them some letters, which in the course of his correspondence he had received from several bishops of the greatest eminence in the Church; amongst others there was one from St. Austin, in which the holy doctor expressed real kindness and friendship for him. When he came to answer the propositions, which he acknowledged to be his, he began to quibble, to equivocate, and to gloss them over with a plausible, though very unsatisfactory explanation in a Catholic sense, in which he always meant them, as he said, to be understood. He acknowledged an inaccuracy of expression in them, but denied the construction put upon them by his accusers. This answer did not satisfy the council; the obvious meaning of the propositions conveyed an heretical sense; the bishops insisted upon his condemning and abjuring them; he did so; they thought him sincere, and dismissed him without censure.

Elated at his escape from censure, though by an act of perjury, Pelagius published an imperfect account of what had passed at Diospolis, and boasted in a letter to his acquaintance in Africa, that the council had decided in his favor. The African bishops knew his artifices too well to be imposed upon, and as his heresy began to spread, they assembled two councils, one at Carthage, and another at Milevis, in the year 416. Both these councils, in conformity with Catholic belief, expressly defined that the sin of Adam has descended to his posterity, and that without the help of divine grace, which moves and strengthens the will of man, man can perform no meritorious act worthy of a

supernatural recompense. They sent this decision to Pope Innocent, at Rome, praying it might be sanctioned by his apostolical authority. The holy Pontiff, after bestowing great praises on the zeal and pastoral vigilance they had shown for the defence of the Catholic faith, confirmed their decisions, condemned the errors of Pelagius and Celestius, and declared them and their adherents separated from the communion of the Catholic Church. St. Austin, who had taken a very active part in this business, considered it to be now ended. "Rome," says he,* "has spoken; the sentence of the African bishops has been transmitted to the Apostolic See; the Pontiff's letters, that confirm it, are come to hand; the cause is finally decided." CAUSA FINITA EST.

Pride, the stubborn parent of all heresies, would not suffer her Pelagian offspring to renounce their errors. Pelagius and Celestius, both profoundly skilled in the art of dissimulation, only studied how to elude the sentence that condemned them, how to guard against the disgrace of being accounted rebels to the Church, and yet retain their heterodox opinions. They feigned submission. In modest and respectful terms, Pelagius addressed a letter to Pope Innocent, with his profession of faith. His asseverations seemed to breathe sincerity, his real sentiments lay concealed under the cover of a dubious and deceitful language. Celestius made his appearance at Rome, presented to the Pope his profession of faith, which was, word for word, the same as that of his friend Pelagius, complained bitterly of the violence of his accusers, and in general terms professed an entire deference to the judgment of the holy See, begging to be directed and corrected by it, if through mistake he was wrong. Zosimus, who had lately succeeded St. Innocent, judging from the goodness of his own heart, was

* Serm. 131.

inclined to believe, what he charitably wished, that Celestius was sincere, and even wrote a letter in his favor to the bishops of Africa, but refused to take off his excommunication before he received their answer. The African prelates immediately perceived that his Holiness had given too much credit to specious promises. St. Aurelius, of Carthage, lost no time in summoning the bishops to meet him in council at Carthage: they met to the number of two hundred and fourteen, in the year 418. The council fully entered into the merits of the cause, developed the complicated folds of imposture, detected its malice, declared their firm adhesion to the apostolical decree of Pope Innocent, and concluded that the sentence of excommunication pronounced by him, against Pelagius and Celestius, ought not to be revoked, till they had condemned and abjured their heresy in terms the most explicit, lest the faithful should imagine that error had been countenanced or approved by the holy See. They sent their decision, with a synodical letter, to Rome. Zosimus now saw that the two equivocating hypocrites had only sought to amuse and deceive him. He cited Celestius to appear again; but the conscious heretic was gone. Zosimus then published a decree, in which he solemnly condemned the Pelagian heresy and confirmed the sentence of excommunication, pronounced by his predecessor, against Pelagius and Celestius. He sent it into Africa, and to the chief churches of the east, where it was respectfully received, and supported by the imperial edicts of Honorius and Theodosius.

The Pelagian faction, in a transport of obstinate resistance, made an impotent appeal from the Pope's decree to a general council; a procedure never heard of before that time, but copied since by the schismatical disciples of Jansenius. The two heresiarchs, Pelagius and Celestius, lurked

secretly in the east till they died in silent obscurity. In Italy, eighteen bishops refused to submit to the Papal decree, and were deprived of their Sees. The most distinguished among them was Julian, bishop of Eclanum, in Campania, a vain man, full of Pelagian pride, but of quick parts, and of no contemptible learning, as his writings show. St. Austin, in his elaborate answer to him, has refuted his arguments with invincible force, and established, on scripture ground, the Catholic doctrine of divine grace beyond reply.

From the ashes of Pelagianism sprung up a new sect, less extravagant in terms, though not less erroneous in principle. This error originated with certain priests and monks in the neighborhood of Marseilles, at Lerins, in Gaul. These men, taking offence at St. Austin's doctrine of grace, as destructive of free will, erroneously contended that the beginning of faith, and the first desire of virtue are from the powers of man alone, unassisted by divine grace, and that these virtuous desires of the human heart move God to bestow such grace as is necessary for the accomplishment of good works. This doctrine holds a middle course between the Catholic truths of St. Austin and the errors of Pelagius; hence it has acquired the name of Semipelagianism. Cassian, at Marseilles, one of the greatest masters of a spiritual life, and certain monks of Lerins, were the principal persons who espoused this doctrine. St. Austin, at the request of St. Prosper, a learned layman, confuted their error in two books, but treats them as brethren, because they erred without obstinacy. The Semipelagian heresy was condemned in the second council of Orange, in which St. Cæsarius, bishop of Arles, presided, in the year 529. Pope Boniface II., confirmed the sentence in a letter to that holy bishop.

SECTION VII.

Nestorius, Bishop of Constantinople.

(A. D. 428.) THE violence of Eudoxia's party drew after it very evil consequences, which lasted for some years, both at Constantinople and Alexandria. By the intrigues of that faction we have seen the great St. Chrysostom unjustly expelled and banished from his See, and his name disgracefully expunged from the register of Catholic bishops. These proceedings appeared to St. Innocent, the bishop of Rome, so repugnant to every principle of justice, of charity and religion, that he rejected the authors and abettors of them from his communion. In that state of schism died the proud and boisterous Theophilus, bishop of Alexandria, in 412; the public voice chose his nephew, Cyril, to succeed him. At Constantinople, upon the expulsion of St. Chrysostom, Arsacius, the brother of Nectarius, then eighty years of age, was thrust into his place. He held, rather than enjoyed, his usurped dignity only one year, and then dying, left it to Atticus, one of the most active and most violent of the party. In those schismatical sentiments, Atticus persisted till the year 415, when being compelled by the voice of the people, as well as by the voice of conscience, he consented to insert the name of the injured Chrysostom in the diptics, and was thereupon received by St. Innocent into his communion. He did all he could to persuade Cyril, the bishop of Alexandria, to profit by his example. For Cyril was in the same error. Having received his education under Theophilus, he had unfortunately imbibed his prejudices against St. Chrysostom. Hurried away by a blind deference to the pretended synod of the Oak, he continued deaf to all remonstrances made to him upon the subject, till

the year 419, when he at length yielded to the warm exhortations of St. Isodore of Pelusium. He then received letters of reconciliation with the see of Rome, not from Zosimus, who died the year before, but from Boniface, his successor. Atticus died in the year 425, and was succeeded by Sisinnius, a man of singular piety and charity towards the poor. The death of Sisinnius, in 428, made place for Nestorius, the heresiarch.

Nestorius, a native of Syria, received his education in the monastery of Euprepus, near Antioch; there he entered into holy orders, and was employed by the bishop as a catechist to instruct the catechumens. In that capacity he frequently declaimed against the unpopular sectaries of the east, the Arians, the Apollinarists, and Origenists; he professed himself the admirer and imitator of St. John Chrysostom. His modesty of dress, the gravity of his gait, a mortified look, and retirement from the noisy world, acquired him a general reputation for piety and learning. An easy flow of language, uttered with a fine accent, and an agreeable tone of voice, recommended him to the public as an eloquent and pleasing orator. With these external accomplishments he came to Constantinople, and was chosen to succeed Sisinnius in that archiepiscopal See.

Nestorius had scarce taken possession of his church, when he began to distinguish himself by the novelty of his doctrine. It had always been the uniform belief of the Catholic Church, that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, no other than the divine Word made flesh, as St. John expresses it; so that in Jesus Christ there are two distinct natures and only one person, which is that of the Son, the second person of the most adorable Trinity. In opposition to this Catholic doctrine, Nestorius preached two distinct persons in Christ, that of God and that of Man, joined

together by a moral union in such sort, that the Godhead dwelt in the humanity merely as in its temple. Hence he denied the Incarnation, or that God was made man; hence he asserted that the blessed Virgin Mary ought not to be styled the Mother of God, but mother of the man Christ, whose humanity was only the temple of the Divinity, and not a nature hypostatically assumed by the divine person. This strange system, delivered for the first time from the pulpit of St. Sophia, so shocked the audience that they stopped their ears, and ran out of the Church, lest, by staying, they should become partakers of the blasphemy. The clergy and the people were equally scandalized. This first and general burst of disapprobation is worthy of notice, because it is the sure mark of a new doctrine, never heard before. But the blasphemer had his partisans at court, nor was he without hopes of gaining the emperor himself. Notwithstanding the general cry against him, he would not listen to the advice of his own respectable clergy, who refused to communicate with him, he persisted in his errors, and sent abroad his homilies that contained them.

These homilies fell into the hands of St. Cyril, the learned bishop of Alexandria; shocked at the doctrine which he there met with, he immediately noticed it in a letter to the author, and exhorted him to retract. In answer to this charitable expostulation, he received nothing but the abusive language of pride and contempt. Dreading then the fatal consequences which seemed likely to ensue, he judged it necessary to provide the faithful with a timely antidote against the poisonous cup, which was held out to them by the hand of Nestorius. This he did by setting forth, in clear and concise terms, a Catholic exposition of the mystery of the Incarnation. Among other things he says, "I am astonished how any Christian can call in question the

divine maternity of the blessed Virgin Mary, or doubt whether she is to be styled the Mother of God. For if our Lord Jesus Christ is God, and that he is so, the scriptures clearly teach, the holy Virgin, his mother, who brought him forth, must consequently be the Mother of God. This the Apostles taught, this all our predecessors have delivered to us, this is the Catholic doctrine and belief of Christ's Church: not that the divine Word had a beginning from Mary, but that in her was formed a pure body, animated with a rational soul, to which the Word was hypostatically united, and so became man in one and the same divine person. Thus, in the order of nature, a woman, who bears a son, is truly called the mother of a man, although she only concurs in the formation of his body, and has no part in the creation of his soul." To cut the matter short, St. Cyril drew up twelve propositions with Anathemas, and sent them to Nestorius, requesting him to sign them as a proof of his orthodoxy. Nestorius rejected them.

St. Cyril being thus disappointed in his hope of bringing Nestorius back to his duty, by a friendly admonition in private, denounced him to the Church. To Pope Celestine, the successor of St. Boniface, he wrote a full account of what had passed between him and Nestorius, and strongly urged the necessity of applying some speedy remedy to the growing evil. St. Celestine immediately assembled a council of the neighboring bishops. The writings of Nestorius were laid before them, diligently examined, and found repugnant to the truths of divine revelation. The Pope condemned the errors contained in them, by a formal sentence, an authentic copy of which he sent to all the metropolitans of the east. He moreover pronounced sentence of deposition and excommunication against Nestorius, if, within ten days after the notification of it, he did not publicly

abjure and condemn the errors he had publicly advanced. The sentence was accompanied with a commission to St. Cyril to see it duly executed. The constant recourse which was had to the Roman See from every part of the Christian world, in all causes of greater moment, is an undeniable proof that the supremacy, not of honor only, but of jurisdiction, was universally acknowledged to reside in the Roman Pontiff, the successor of St. Peter, over the whole Church. To this rock, as to their last resource, the great Sees of Alexandria, of Antioch, of Jerusalem, of Constantinople and Carthage, finally recurred in the obstinate contests they had to support against Arians, Donatists, Pelagians and Nestorians, as the historical facts of those times clearly testify.

SECTION VIII.

Third general Council at Ephesus.

(A. D. 431.) In the affair of Nestorius, St. Cyril now moved with superior powers under a commission from the holy See. He immediately adopted such measures as a prudent zeal suggested, to bring matters to a happy issue. He convened a synod at Alexandria, wrote pressing letters to John and Juvenal, the bishops of Antioch and Jerusalem, for their concurrence with him in this important controversy, solicited the emperor's support, and exerted all the force of exhortation and argument to draw Nestorius from the pit he was running into. But St. Cyril soon found that it was not a single bishop, but a powerful opposition he had to

contend with. Nestorius had the address to gain a respectable party both at court and among the bishops, though none of them seem to have espoused his errors. The proud Theophilus was still remembered by many; his violences against the holy Chrysostom were not forgotten. Cyril was his nephew and successor in the See of Alexandria; he himself had for many years resisted the first authorities, and refused to do justice to the memory of a persecuted confessor, taken from the clergy of Antioch, as well as Nestorius, and advanced to the See of Constantinople. From that circumstance, many were inclined to think, that the present contest was no more than a mere rivalry of ecclesiastical pre-eminence, and therefore opposed, at all hazards, the Alexandrine prelate.

By John, the patriarch of Antioch, and by Theodoret, the learned bishop of Cyr, a town in Syria, it was moreover contended that Cyril had gone too far in his twelve anathematisms against Nestorius, and had fallen into the errors of Apollinaris. Theodoret took up his pen and wrote against them. In this conflict of writings and opinions the evil increased, the faithful were divided, and nothing but a general council, it was thought, would repair the breach. Both parties addressed the emperor on that subject, as without his aid the distant bishops could not be brought together. Theodosius readily adopted the proposal, and jointly with young Valentinian III. who had succeeded his uncle Honorius in the Western empire, directed an order of convocation in the usual style, to be sent to the metropolitans of the empire. The letter was dated November the nineteenth, 430. The day fixed for their meeting at Ephesus was the seventh of June of the following year.

As soon as the Easter holydays were over, St. Cyril and Nestorius set forward for the town of Ephesus, the first

with about fifty bishops of Egypt, the latter with a number of soldiers, and two military Counts at their head, Candidian and Irenæus. Juvenal, of Jerusalem, with the bishop of Palestine, arrived five days after the fixed time; with them came Peter, bishop of Saracens, or wandering Arabs, who had lately embraced the Christian faith. John, of Antioch, and his Syrians, were affectedly slow on purpose, as the event showed, not to concur in the disgrace of their countryman, Nestorius. When at no great distance, John wrote a friendly letter to St. Cyril, and sent forward two of his bishops to desire that the opening of the Council might not be deferred on his account, promising to be there as soon as he conveniently could. Upon this, St. Cyril, with the approbation of the other bishops who were arrived, fixed the twenty-second of June, for the day of holding the first session, hoping that the Syrians would, as they might, arrive by that time. On the twenty-first, four bishops were deputed to notify to Nestorius and his adherents, that the Council would hold its first public session on the next day, according to appointment. He answered by a formal protestation against it, signed by sixty-eight bishops of his party. Theodoret was one of them.

In the morning of the twenty-second of June, as had been agreed on, a hundred and fifty-eight bishops met in the great church of Ephesus, which was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. In the centre, upon a high throne, was placed a book of the holy gospel; the bishops sat on each side according to their rank, St. Cyril, in the name of Pope Celestine, presided as his representative. Scarce had the Fathers taken their seats, when Count Candidian appeared, and, in the emperor's name, forbade them to proceed. They called upon him to show the imperial order; he had it not to show; he retired in great wrath, and the council entered

upon business. Nestorius, having received three citations, and refusing still to appear, an authentic copy of his sermons was produced and read. A general cry instantly arose, repeating "Anathema to these impious errors; anathema to him who holds this doctrine; it is a doctrine contrary to the holy Scripture, and to the tradition of our forefathers." Extracts from the most illustrious Fathers of the Church were then read and compared with the positions of Nestorius. In the last place, each bishop present was called upon, by name, to give evidence of the faith believed and taught in his respective church. Unanimous was the testimony of all and each individual in affirming the same belief, that the blessed Virgin Mary was truly the Mother of God. The definition of this declared truth was drawn out in due form, and sentence of excommunication and deposition solemnly pronounced against the heretic Nestorius. The decision of the Council was received with loud shouts of approbation from every quarter: the name of Mary, the Theotokos, that is, the Mother of God, was instantly echoed through all the streets of Ephesus.

Five days after arrived John, of Antioch, with fourteen Syrian bishops. The Council deputed some of their body to meet and compliment them on their arrival, and to warn them against holding any communication with Nestorius, whom the Council had juridically condemned and excommunicated for heresy. But the soldiers, whom Candidian had sent to escort the patriarch John into town, had orders not to let the deputies approach. John and his Syrians went straight to the lodgings of Nestorius, with whom they formed a separate assembly, condemned all the Council had done, and proceeded so far as to pronounce sentence of excommunication and deposition against Cyril, of Alexandria, and Memnon of Ephesus, and of excommunication against

the rest of the Council. Candidian lent all his authority to the schismatics, and, as he had taken care to intercept the synodical letters of the Council, in their way to Constantinople, gave so plausible an account of the Nestorian party, in his despatches to the emperor, that slander triumphed for a while, and truth lay suppressed. Strange confusion reigned at Ephesus. The schismatical bishops were thirty-five in number, protected by a military force, and the civil power. But the Council was steady, and not to be intimidated. Threats of banishment hung over St. Cyril, when three legates arrived from Pope Celestine, and gave a new turn to affairs. A second session was held, in which the decisions and acts of the first session were revived and ratified by the new legates, the sentence against Nestorius was confirmed, that of the schismatics against St. Cyril, and the Council declared to be null and void. The catholic doctrine of the Incarnation was defined and subscribed by upwards of two hundred bishops.

The object of the Council being now attained, the bishops might have departed home, had it not been for the disputes between them and the schismatics, of which the emperor thought proper to take cognizance. This tedious and disagreeable process detained them at Ephesus till towards the end of October. During that time they held four other sessions on different subjects, chose a successor to Nestorius, in the See of Constantinople, and confirmed the condemnation of Pelagianism, to stop the mouths of the Appellants. The emperor, at length, being fully informed of the true state of things, respectfully submitted to the decrees of the Council, and supported them with his whole authority. Nestorius was banished, first to his monastery, near Antioch, and then to Oasis, a town in Upper Egypt, where he died

miserably and impenitent, in the year 435. His blasphemous tongue is said to have been gnawed away by worms; of his episcopal adherents, some persisted in their error, others submitted, after some demur, and reconciled themselves with the Church; the patriarch, John of Antioch, and Theodoret, were among the latter. The heresy of Nestorius spread afterwards among the orientals, and many of that sect remain there to this day.

SECTION IX.

Saints Germanus and Lupus.

(A. D. 432.) ST. CELESTINE, whose pastoral solieitude extended over the whole flock of Christ, was not so engaged in settling the disputes of the east, as to withdraw his attention from the west. Agricola, a disciple of Pelagius, had ventured to broach his errors among the Britons, his countrymen. The British clergy were alarmed at the appearance of new doctrines amongst them. Better versed in the practice, than in the disputes of religion, they applied to the neighboring prelates of Gaul for theological assistance, against the subtle enemies of divine grace. Palladius, a deacon of Rome, was already in the island, and had informed St. Celestine of the danger that threatened the British church. Celestine commissioned St. Germanus, bishop of Auxerre, to go thither in quality of his vicar, in 429, as St. Prosper, a cotemporary writer in Gaul, tells us in his chronicle. The bishops of Gaul, in a numerous assembly, convened for the same purpose, chose St. Lupus, bishop of Troyes, to accompany him in that important mission. They

were joyfully received by the inhabitants of Britain: the fame of their sanctity, doctrine, and miracles soon roused the whole country: they preached in the open air, the churches being too small to admit the multitudes that crowded with eagerness to hear and learn. Their labors were crowned with wonderful success. The Pelagians at first shunned their company, till reflecting, that such shyness seemed to indicate a consciousness of guilt, they consented to discuss the controverted points of religion in a public conference to be held at Verulam, now called St. Albans. A vast concourse of people flocked thither on the day appointed to hear the disputation. The Pelagians spoke first, and mustered up every argument they could, in defence of their master's doctrine. When they had done, the apostolic missionaries entered at full length upon the question in dispute, brought such convincing proofs from *scriptura*, of the Catholic doctrine concerning grace and original sin, and so completely silenced their antagonists, that they had nothing to reply.

In confirmation of the truth, it opportunely happened that a blind girl was presented to Germanus, by her parents, begging him to restore her sight. The humble prelate bade them lead her to the Pelagian doctors. But they, having no pretensions to the gift of miracles, sent her back to the Catholic bishop. Then Germanus, laying a little box of relics, which he always carried about him, upon the girl's eyes, and invoking the blessed Trinity, restored her to her sight, in testimony of the truths he taught. The whole multitude witnessed the miracle, and gave joyful thanks to God. From the place of conference, the two bishops went to the tomb of St. Alban, the proto-martyr of Britain. Germanus caused the sepulchre to be opened; there he deposited his box of relics, and in return took from thence a

little of the dust, which had the appearance of having been tinged with the martyr's blood.

The account of St. Germanus' mission and transactions in Britain, is given at some length, by Constantius, a priest of Lyons, his cotemporary and biographer. Archbishop Parker has transcribed it, almost word for word, into his book of *Antiquities*, except the miracle and relics, which he passed over in silence. Such silence undoubtedly had its meaning in the transcriber's mind; it has enabled him to tell his readers, in another place, if not with truth, at least without contradiction to himself, that the doctrine of miracles, of relics, and of the veneration of saints, were not known in Britain before they were sent thither by Gregory, the Roman pontiff. Doctor Cave speaks more candidly of the miracles wrought by St. Alban; and the ingenious Mr. Collier says, "he does not see why they should be questioned, being attested by authors of such credit. That miracles were wrought in the Church at that time of day, is clear from the writings of the ancients."

Germanus and Lupus, having fulfilled the object of their mission, returned to Gaul. But some seeds of Pelagianism were still left, which, in the course of a few years, sprouted out afresh, and called Germanus back into the island. In the year 446, he crossed the sea again, with St. Severus, the archbishop of Triers. They discovered the authors of these new disturbances, reduced them to silence and restored peace to the British Church a second time. About the year of St. German's first arrival in Britain, St. Patrick, his disciple, was ordained by Pope Celestine, the bishop and apostle of Ireland.* Palladius also, who had resided some time in Britain, and was instrumental in procuring it assistance

* For a more particular account of the Apostles of Ireland, see the Appendix to this volume.

against the Pelagian heresy, was made bishop about the same time, and sent, by Celestine, to preach the Gospel to the northern Picts. To the southern Picts, who bordered upon the north of Britain, the Gospel had been announced some years before, by St. Ninian. This apostolical man, a native of Caledonia, had spent part of his youth at Rome, where he acquired a solid fund, both of virtue and learning. Being ordained bishop, he was sent by Pope Siricius to carry the name of Christ to his idolatrous countrymen. There, with unwearied zeal, he labored for eight and thirty years to instruct and civilize that fierce and uncultivated people. He erected a Church of stone at Whithern, in Galloway, where he fixed his episcopal See, and where, after his death, he was honorably interred in 432, leaving a memory behind him, no less renowned for miracles, than for sanctity of life, as the Centuriators of Magdeburg testify. Thus, from Rome, the centre of Catholicity, we see the faith of Christ diffusing its salutary beams over the rugged mountains of Caledonia, and the inhospitable wilds of Hibernia, as it had done long before, through the Roman province of Britain.

SECTION X.

State of Britain.

(A. D. 440.) BRITAIN, from the time of its first conversion to Christianity, enjoyed the free exercise of religion without molestation, till the reign of Dioclesian, when, with the rest of the Christian world, it bled under the persecution of that cruel tyrant. The discipline, the doctrine, the

government of the British Church was in every respect conformable to the Roman practice. She had her national bishops in communion, and under the spiritual jurisdiction of the bishop of Rome, from whom she received the faith through the ministry of Saints Fugatius and Damianus. That faith she preserved, pure and unblemished, for the space of two hundred and fifty years, as Bede testifies. Pelagianism at length made an effort to disturb her peace, and to alter her belief. St. German, deputed from the Gallican clergy, by Pope Celestine, came over and announced the orthodox faith of Rome. Heresy was confounded, and appeared no more.

But, notwithstanding their orthodoxy, the Britons, in the beginning of the fifth century, had greatly degenerated from the zeal and piety of their forefathers. A deluge of licentiousness began to overflow the nation. The vices that prevailed among the nobles, the clergy, and the people, are amply described by St. Gildas, in his account of those times. With bitter grief does that ancient writer deplore the destruction of a people to whom he had preached the Gospel truths, and who, by their obstinacy in sin, had drawn that dreadful scourge upon themselves.

Britain, though reduced to the form of a Roman province, being allowed to retain her own laws and internal policy, may be said to have been under the protection, rather than the dominion of imperial Rome. The presence of the stationary legions at once commanded internal peace, and secured her territory against foreign invasion. The Picts from Caledonia, and the Scots from Ireland, had frequently infested her with their depredations on the northern frontier and the western coast, but never ventured to face her legions in the field. But when the Roman troops were recalled to defend the capital itself against Goths and Vandals, then

was Britain exposed to the more dangerous attacks of her old invaders. Saxons likewise, Jutes and Angles from the opposite coast of Germany found their way to her eastern shore. Thus attacked on different sides, she applied to the imperial court for assistance. Honorius was too much distressed himself, to succor or protect her; he freed her from the bond of allegiance, and declared her independent: Independence only served to betray her weakness. Drained of her warlike youth, by the ambitious Maximus, and not yet sufficiently recovered to resist her fierce invaders, she sent to solicit succors from the Armoricans, her former offspring. But the Armoricans had other employment for their troops. Like the other provinces of Gaul, they were fighting for their own independence against the imperial Generals, and had no succors to spare for their mother country.

The disappointed Britons then found they had no other resource than in their own national strength. By universal consent they resolved to choose a king, and to invest him with sovereign power. They fancied the name of king would command respect, and unite the nation in one general confederacy against the common enemy. Their choice fell upon Vortigern, a noble Cornishman, who was thought to be possessed of abilities equal to the exigencies of the state. But those abilities he either never had, or never chose to show. Vortigern began his reign in 438. Pleased with the gaudy pageantry of power, he gave himself up to pride, to indolence, and lust. Instead of drawing the national force together, and of meeting his northern enemies in the field, he sent deputies into Germany to hire troops for his service. An idolatrous troop of Saxons came over in 449 to fight his battles, under the command of Hengist and Horsa. Hengist brought with him his beautiful daughter, Rowena. Captivated with her charms, the adulterous Vortigern made

her his queen and dismissed his lawful wife: on the idolatrous father he bestowed the principality of Kent. This first importation of Pagan mereenaries was quickly followed by a succession of others who were glad to exchange the bleak wilds of Germany for the fertile fields of Britain. Fresh crowds continued to come over, till they found themselves in sufficient force to conquer the country which they had been hired to defend. The Britons saw their error when it was too late to retrieve it. The Saxons turned their arms against them, and by progressive conquests, as will be seen, forced them to relinquish one district after another, till they shut them up in the extremity of the island, among the mountains of Wales and Cornwall. Through all the conquered country, where religion had so nobly flourished, the gloomy rites of Paganism were now established. Then it was that many of the Britons crossed the ocean, and sought a settlement in Armorica, where a kindred colony, the followers of Maximus, had erected themselves into an independent state against the languid powers of Rome. Thither St. Ursula, with a numerous train of British virgins, intended likewise to retire, but by contrary winds was driven up the channel as far as the mouth of the Rhine. There they were no sooner set on shore, than assailed by a rude banditti of Huns, and barbarously massacred in defence of their virginity. This memorable event happened, according to the best accounts, about the year 453, and not in the foregoing century, as some careless writers have related. Amongst other improbable circumstances that accompany the narrative of these authors, they fix it at a period when no Huns had been yet known to approach the banks of the Rhine.

SECTION XI.

Desolation of the Western Empire.

(A. D. 441.) THE Goths, who contributed so much to the ruin of the Roman empire, sprung originally from Sweden, near the Baltic sea. Being afterwards divided into two nations, and gaining settlements both in the eastern and western empire, they are distinguished by two appellations. Those in the east are called Ostrogoths, those in the west Visigoths. Before their separation they had embraced the Christian faith, but under the reign of Valens became tinged with Arianism. The followers of Alaric quitted Italy, as has been related, and under the command of Ataulph settled themselves in Gaul. The Vandals, and other savages from Germany, under Rodogastus, followed them. The enterprising leaders of these barbarians made cruel war upon the old inhabitants, and, by successive conquests, established several independent states in the very heart of the Roman empire. The generals of Honorius made but a feeble stand against their growing numbers: the imperial eagle was compelled to fly before the victorious banners of the petty kings of Burgundy, of Soissons, of Orleans, and Toulouse. About the year 408, a motley tribe of Goths, Vandals, Sueves, and Alains passed the Pyrenees, and penetrated into the rich provinces of Spain. These roving warriors, being either Arians or Pagans, spread universal desolation through the country, destroyed the churches, put the inhabitants to the sword, and exterminated all public practice of the Catholic religion, wherever they conquered. In the year 427, Genseric, a furious Arian, established his kingdom of the Visigoths in Andalusia, planted the seeds of Arianism through the whole extent of his dominions, and.

during the course of a long reign, persecuted the Catholic religion with unrelenting rage as far as his power reached. But before we proceed to recount his cruel deeds in Africa, the order of time calls us back to relate the changes that took place in the imperial court at Ravenna.

From the time that Alaric invaded Italy, the pusillanimous emperor, Honorius, spent his days in ignoble security at Ravenna, from whence he sent his generals to encounter the dangers of the field. After the death of Stilico, he seems to have reposed his chief trust in Constantius, one of his generals. This able officer commanded the Roman army in Spain and Gaul against their barbarous invaders, and if his military exertions had not the success he hoped for, they at least deserved it. In reward of his services, Honorius gave him in marriage his sister, Galla Placidia, then a widow by the death of Ataulph, and in the year 420, made him his colleague in the western empire. Constantius enjoyed that honor no longer than seven months, when death hurried him from his throne to the tomb. He left behind him two children by Placidia, Honoria and Valentinian. Honorius, who survived him only two years, had quarrelled with Placidia the year before he died, and forced her with her two children to seek an assylum in the court of Constantinople. Dying without issue, he was succeeded in the empire by his infant nephew, Valentinian III. Valentinian had the name, Placidia held the reins of government.

Placidia was a religious princess, endowed with good natural talents; she admired, and strove to copy the eminent abilities of the wife and sister of Theodosius. But she possessed not the elegant address of Eudocia, nor the wise policy of Pulcheria: the quarrels of the generals unhappily betrayed her into errors, which in the end proved fatal to the state. The imperial armies were commanded by two

experienced generals, Aetius and Boniface, whose united talents might for some time longer have buoyed up the sinking empire. Their discord brought on the loss of Africa. Aetius was an intriguing courtier, bold in action, but false in the cabinet. He commanded in Italy, and had the ear of Placidia. Boniface was his rival in fame, his equal in military skill, in principle and honor his superior. He commanded in Africa, and for his virtues was the intimate friend of St. Austin. Being sent by the court on a secret commission into Spain, he there married a Vandal lady, and got acquainted with Genseric, king of the Visigoths. His treacherous friend, Aetius, who envied his good fortune, laid hold of that circumstance to effect his ruin. He insinuated to the empress that Boniface had formed a plan of making himself an independent governor of Africa, by the arms of the Visigoths, and that to be convinced of the truth of it, she need but send an order for him to return into Italy; his conduct on the receipt of this order, said he, will manifest either his innocence or his guilt. In the interim, he despatched letters, under the cover of friendship, to inform the unsuspecting general that his loyalty was called in question, that there would be an order for his return to Italy, but if he obeyed he was a lost man.

This intelligence from a brother officer, to whom he had been always kind, and whom he thought sincere, threw him into a strange agitation of mind. The alternate dictates of loyalty on one hand, and self-preservation on the other, held him for some time in suspense what to do. The love of life in the end prevailed. He armed the Africans in his defence. But Africans alone he knew would be too weak to resist the forces he expected to be sent against him. He despatched a trusty messenger with advantageous offers to

Genseric in Spain, if he would lead an army to his assistance. The Vandal readily accepted the offer, that favored his ambitious views. He embarked with an army of fifty thousand fighting men, set sail from the spot where Gibraltar now stands, and landed safe on the opposite shore in 428. His first undertaking was to strengthen his army by the accession of new allies. Mauritania, which borders on the great desert and Atlantic ocean, swarmed with a sullen race of men, whose savage temper had been rather exasperated than tamed by the Roman arms. They looked upon the Romans as the polished tyrants of mankind, who without provocation had expelled them from their hereditary possessions, from the native sovereignty of the land. The desire of revenge drew vast crowds of these naked savages round the standard of Genseric.

Count Boniface's conduct all this while was a subject of no less wonder than concern to his friends in the court of Ravenna. They could not believe, that it sprung from a principle of disloyalty; they suspected some hidden cause, which they could not discover. With the empress' approbation they passed over into Africa to sound him. He laid before them the letters of Aetius. The whole secret appeared at once; the villainy of that perfidious general was detected. Boniface in a moment saw and bewailed the error, into which his hasty credulity had betrayed him. But the mischief was now done. He pretended no excuse for the fact he had committed; but wholly threw himself upon the imperial clemency. Placidia lamented with him their common misfortune; generously pitied and forgave him. She moreover confirmed him in his military command. Boniface's concern, then, was how to get rid of Genseric. By entreaties, by menaces, and by offers of money, he endeavored to prevail upon him to go back into

Spain. The Vandal saw himself at the head of a sufficient force to reduce the province, and would hearken to no proposals: he attacked the Roman general and defeated him. This defeat laid the country open to the ravages of merciless Moors and Vandals. Boniface retreated to the strong city of Hippo Regius, where he was besieged. The siege lasted fourteen months, during which, in 430, died the learned St. Austin, bishop of the place, the light and glory of the Catholic Church. The town was at last taken and burnt by the savage conqueror. After that, Genseric entered into a treaty of peace, by which he gained possession of a part of the province. Under that cover he watched the time, when the Romans were off their guard, and seized upon the city of Carthage, in 439. This treacherous act deprived the emperialists of their last strong hold, and established the Vandal power along the whole coast of Africa, from Tangier to Tripoli.

Thus was that fertile province irreparably severed from the Roman empire. The Vandal tyrant immediately began to oppress and persecute his Catholic subjects in a most cruel manner, declared himself a particular enemy to the clergy, drove the bishops from their sees, and made Arianism the established religion of the country. To view the desolation of Africa in a political light, we see nothing beyond the ordinary course of human events. But in a religious light, we discover the hand of God turning the projects of ambitious men to his own adorable designs, for the punishment of a sinful people. The African people at that time were defiled with every kind of sin, that cries to heaven for vengeance, as Salvian writes in answer to the heathens,* who ascribed the calamities of the Roman

*De gubern. L. 7.

empire to the abandoned worship of its ancient deities. This taunt of the heathens is likewise solidly confuted by St. Austin, in his City of God.

SECTION XII.

Dissolution of the Western Empire.

(A. D. 455.) THE dissolute character of Valentinian III. gave the world an idea, though without the least foundation in truth, that Placidia had neglected his education, and diverted his attention from every princely pursuit, in order to keep the reins of government in her own hands. As soon as he attained the age of puberty, she married him to Eudoxia, the daughter of Theodosius and Athenais or Eudocia. In the year 450 the imperial family removed from Ravenna to Rome, where they fixed the court. Placidia died before the end of the year, Valentinian, no longer awed by her authority, or directed by her counsels, plunged without restraint into every disorder, to which his vicious inclination led him. To the weakness of a distracted government was added the invasion of a formidable enemy. Attila, the dreaded monarch of the Huns, a vagabond and warlike race from Tartara, had formed a design of reducing the east and west into one vast empire, under his sole authority, and of sweeping every other independent potentate from the globe. Full of this wild enterprise he assembled myriads of fierce adventurers, whom he disciplined into military order. At the head of five hundred thousand men he marched along the banks of the Danube to the Euxine sea, from whence he rolled on, like a resistless

torrent, through the southern provinces of Europe, in his way to Constantinople, ravaging, burning, and destroying the whole country with its towns and villages. Theodosius made a fruitless attempt to stop his progress; his army was defeated in three bloody battles; the impregnable walls of Constantinople saved the empire. Glutted with blood and plunder, the barbarian at length consented to listen to proposals of peace, which he granted on very humiliating terms to Theodosius. Proud of having forced the Christian emperor of the east to become his tributary, he led back his army into Hungary.

An active life of peace suited not the genius of that enterprising barbarian. From the plundered east, he turned his baleful eye upon the west. In the year 450, Attila began his expedition against the western empire. With an immense army he set off from Hungary, directing his course through Germany, towards the lower Rhine. Large swarms of adventurers joined him upon the march, and swelled his whole force to half a million of hardy combatants. Devastation, plunder, cruelty, and bloodshed, with every kind of outrage that can be dreaded from armed and lawless savages, accompanied the march of Attila. He bore down all before him; Metz, Triers, Tongres, Rheims, Cambrai, and all the towns from the banks of the Rhine to the very centre of Gaul, were plundered, burned, or laid in ruins. The former invaders of Gaul, the Goths, Burgundians, Franks, and Alains, then saw themselves in danger of losing their new possessions, and that to preserve their existence, it was necessary to unite their forces against the common enemy. They joined the Roman standard under the command of Aetius. In the plains of Champagne, near Chalons, the two armies met. Fierce, obstinate, and bloody was the conflict. No less than a hundred and sixty-two

thousand Huns are said to have fallen in that memorable battle, fought in the year 451. This defeat forced Attila to quit Gaul, and to lead back his troops into Hungary.

In the following spring, Attila overran Italy. Meeting with no resistance, he ravaged the country at discretion, reduced several of the fairest towns to heaps of stones and ashes, and to finish the work of desolation by one decisive stroke, marched against Rome. Rome was not in a state to resist. Submissive offers and negotiation were the only weapons she had to ward off the blow. In the chair of St. Peter was seated the holy and eloquent Leo, the successor of Sixtus III., who had succeeded Celestine. The venerable pontiff, moved at the danger that threatened the capital of the empire, generously consented to put himself into the power of a savage Tartar, and to expose his life for the public safety. Without arms, and without a guard, relying solely on the protection of God, who guides the hearts of kings, he went to treat with the sanguinary monarch, who was styled the scourge of God, and the terror of mankind. Contrary to expectation, Attila received him with honor, listened with attention to his pathetic and eloquent harangue, and for once suffered the natural ferocity of his temper to be softened into reason. He promised peace to the Romans, drew off his troops, and evacuated Italy. Not long after his return to the royal village, which he had chosen for his residence in Hungary, upon the fertile banks of the Danube, he burst an artery in his sleep and was suffocated in his own blood. The quarrels that divided his sons and followers of his standard, dissolved the vast unwieldy empire of the Huns, which had extended from the Volga to the Rhine.

The dissolute Valentinian, now free from the terrors of a foreign enemy, lent his own hand to hasten the downfall of the empire. Jealous of the power, or provoked at the

treachery of Aetius, in letting Attila escape from Gaul, he stabbed him with his own hand. Thus the murderous attempts of that intriguing general against Count Boniface, at length received their just punishment, though in a manner little becoming a Christian emperor, whose crimes brought him, soon after, to an untimely end. Valentinian, by force, had invaded the chaste bed of Maximus, a wealthy patrician. Maximus, in revenge, procured his assassination, and stepped into the vacant throne, in the year 455. Upon the death of his injured wife, he compelled Eudoxia, the late emperor's widow, to marry him. The high spirit of that empress could not brook the insult done to herself and family. In the transport of her rage, she invited Genseric, from Africa, to come and avenge her wrongs. The invitation was precisely such as that enterprising warrior could desire.

With a vast army of Moors and Vandals, Genseric landed on the Italian coast, and meeting no resistance, marched straight to Rome. Maximus, unable to protect whom he had undertaken to govern, sought to save himself by flight. The indignant populace fell upon the coward, and murdered him in the street. The Roman citizens, seeing themselves destitute of help, in a most forlorn situation, had no other hope than in the zeal and eloquence of St. Leo. Fearless of danger, the holy Pontiff put himself at the head of his clergy, and went out in procession to meet the approaching Vandal, hoping to find him not less inexorable than Attila had been. His hope deceived him. All he could obtain was a faint promise that no house should be burned, that none should be murdered, and no one put to the torture. The gates of the city were thrown open, and an army of rapacious Moors and Vandals was let loose upon the citizens, with full liberty to rob and rife at

discretion for a whole fortnight. Immense was the public and private wealth of Rome, in massy plate, in gold, in silver, in jewels, and precious stuffs, all which the barbaric plunderers, without distinguishing sacred from profane, industriously collected and conveyed in ships to Africa. Among the thousands that were carried off into captivity, was the wretched Eudoxia and her two daughters, a mournful spectacle of the vicissitudes of human life.

The western empire had now no resources left to retard its rapid fall. Violence and intrigue gave and took away the purple from no fewer than nine emperors, in the last twenty years of its existence. Augustulus was the last that wore it. A faction of degenerate Romans had invited Odoacer, a Scythian and an Arian, to come into Italy. He came with an army of barbarians, called the Heruli, from Hungary; he met with no opposition, took the title of King of Italy, and in that capacity was peaceably acknowledged by the Roman people. To him the senate swore allegiance; they solemnly disclaimed the necessity and even the wish of continuing the imperial succession in Italy any longer; in their own and the people's name, they consented that the seat of universal empire should be transported from Rome to Constantinople; thither, in confirmation of their act, they sent the imperial ensigns, the ornaments of the throne and palace, which were willingly received by Zeno, the emperor, and not regretted by Odoacer. This final dissolution of Roman power in the west, in the year 476, leaves us the following fragments of its former greatness; Italy possessed by king Odoacer, Africa by the Vandals, Spain and a great part of Gaul by the Goths, the rest of Gaul by the Burgundians and Franks, Great Britain by the Saxons. Amidst all these temporal revolutions, and the disorders that attended them,

the Church still maintained itself in the same purity of faith and doctrine, as it had done under the persecutions of the first three ages.

SECTION XIII.

Eutyches.

(A. D. 450.) DURING the disasters of the west, the court and church of Constantinople were thrown into confusion. While Pulcheria had the management of affairs, all went smoothly on, both in church and state. For some years, the marriage of Theodosius, with the young Athenian Eudocia, made no alteration in the government of the empire. Eudocia admired the virtues and revered the superior talents of her sister-in-law, to whom she gratefully acknowledged herself indebted for the rank and title of Augusta. But the impression which a favor makes upon the human heart, is apt to wear away by degrees; and what in the beginning was deemed a favor, is at last considered as a debt due to personal merit. Gratitude is seldom one of the steady attendants of a court. Eudocia grew jealous; Chrysaphius, a profligate courtier, in great favor with Theodosius, immediately perceived it, and took every opportunity to sow the seeds of discord between the two sisters. His object was to supplant Pulcheria's power, and to procure her banishment from court. Theodosius was an affectionate brother, a pious and religious prince, but so unfortunately weak and indolent, that to the importunities of a wicked sycophant, and the caresses of an envious wife, he

sacrificed his incomparable sister, and, in her, resigned his own and the public good. To Flavian, the holy and faithful patriarch of Constantinople, he sent an order to make her a deaconess of his church. Flavian privately informed her of the order he had received, and advised her to go out of the way. She retired to a country seat in the plains of Hebdomon, fully intending there to spend the remainder of her days in quiet solitude, sequestered from the busy scenes of a faithless court. Her enemies were satisfied with her retreat, as it gave them entire possession of the imperial power, and left them free to abuse it for their own sinister ends without control. The church soon felt the want of Pulcheria's presence and protection against the new heresy which began to disturb the public peace.

Eutyches, abbot of a numerous monastery near Constantinople, had zealously opposed the heresy of Nestorius: but in opposing one error, he blindly fell into another, equally repugnant to truth. Nestorius erred in asserting two Personalities in Jesus Christ; Eutyches erred in confounding the two natures of Jesus Christ, and admitting only one: after the hypostatical union of the two natures in Christ, he maintained that his human nature was totally absorbed by the divine, and became one with it; so that, in his opinion, Christ had no real body, and consequently, as divine nature was incapable of pain, that he neither died nor suffered in reality, but in appearance only. This strange jumble of errors was denounced to the patriarch Flavian. Flavian tried every lenient and persuasive method to reclaim the deluded man. But finding him obstinate and deaf to all he said, he assembled thirty bishops to discuss the subject with him, and cited Eutyches to appear before them. Docility seldom marks the character of an innovator in religious principles. The stubborn abbot refused to retract his errors,

and suffered the sentence of condemnation and deposition to pass against him. Obstinate in his heresy, and sanguine in his hope of being able to elude the sentence that proscribed it, he put himself under the emperor's protection. He had powerful friends at court, the chief of whom was the eunuch Chrysaphius, and he resolved to try them on that occasion. He moved for a revision of his cause before a more numerous assembly of bishops. Under the influence of Chrysaphius, it was no hard matter to obtain, from the emperor, an order for that effect. Theodosius, as directed, issued an imperial summons for a general council to meet at Ephesus, and to decide the controversy between Flavian and Eutyches. Dioscorus, the turbulent bishop of Alexandria, and a decided Eutychian, was appointed to preside. A hundred and thirty bishops, in consequence of the emperor's order, assembled at Ephesus on the sixth of August 449. This assembly, on account of the violence and injustice that accompanied its decisions, is commonly called the *Latrocinial*, or the *Ephesian conventicle of robbers*. Under the terror of an armed soldiery, introduced into the assembly by two imperial commissaries, threatening all who should dare to oppose the will of Chrysaphius, Eutyches was pronounced orthodox, and St. Flavian condemned. The holy patriarch appealed from the iniquitous sentence to Leo, the bishop of Rome. But that appeal hindered not his being imprisoned, deposed, and banished into Lydia, where he died a few days after, in consequence of the kicks and blows that he received from some hot Eutychian monks. The miserable Theodosius was made to ratify, by a public edict, the whole proceedings of Dioscorus and his faction. St. Leo, on due information, annulled all that had been done.

Pulcheria was all this while enjoying the sweets of her peaceful solitude, from which nothing could have drawn her

but a zeal for religion, and compassion for her brother, whose simplicity was so shamefully abused, to the grief and scandal of all good men. The pressing letters she received from St. Leo, upon that subject, at last determined her. She went to the palace and asked an audience. Being admitted, she so forcibly represented to the emperor, her brother, the unjustifiable acts, into which his evil counsellors had basely led him, that he plainly saw and repented of his error. He banished the infamous Chrysaphius, the author of his misfortunes, but lived not long enough to repair the many wrongs he had done; he died soon after, in July 450. Eudocia, his widow, retired into Palestine, where she ended her days. She carried with her the prejudices she had imbibed in favor of Eutyches, and retained them for five years, before she opened her eyes to the Catholic truth. She lived six years after her return from schism, in the fervent exercise of good works, and died piously in 461.

Pulcheria, after an inactive life for near three years, in her retreat of Hebdomon, took up the reins of government again, to the great joy and advantage of the empire. To give energy to her authority, she judged it expedient to take an associate in the throne. The object of her choice was Marcian, a sage and virtuous senator, a native of Illyricum. Him she invested with the imperial purple, and moreover, married, on the condition of being allowed to remain as she was, a virgin. Marcian readily accepted the honor and condition.

SECTION XIV.

General Council of Chalcedon.

(A. D. 451.) THE decisions of the cabal of Ephesus, sanctioned on the one hand by the late Theodosius, and condemned on the other by St. Leo, excited quick sensations in the public mind at Constantinople. The errors of Eutyches, under the influence of Dioscorus, were making rapid progress through Egypt and the eastern provinces. Deluded by the cry that Eutychism was nothing more than the bare opposite of Nestorianism, multitudes mistook and embraced it for the orthodox doctrine of the Catholic Church. The authority of a general Council was thought absolutely necessary to undeceive the people in this point. Conformably to the Pope's desire, Marcian issued an imperial mandate to the bishops within his jurisdiction, that by the first day of October 451, they should repair to Chalcedon, a small town near Constantinople. Three hundred and sixty bishops met at the time and place appointed. St. Leo wished to assist and preside in person; but the critical situation of affairs in the west not suffering him to quit Rome, he sent three legates, two bishops and a priest, to preside in his name. They assembled in the great church of St. Euphemia, which stood out of the town of Chalcedon, on a gentle declivity bordering on the shore of the Bosphorus: the first session was held on the eighth day of October. Dioscorus, the patriarch of Alexandria, having taken his seat according to the rank he held in the church, Paschasinus, the Pope's legate, and bishop of Lilibeum, rose up and publicly preferred a formal accusation against him, for his uncanonical conduct in the conventicle of Ephesus, and insisted, according to his instructions from Pope Leo, that

this point should be discussed and settled, before any other question was proposed. Dioscorus, thus accused, was compelled, after some altercation, to leave his seat, and sit down in the middle of the assembly. Notorious facts evinced his guilt; sentence of deposition was pronounced against him; he appeared no more.

After this, the fathers entered upon the question of doctrine concerning the divine and human nature of Jesus Christ, the prime object of their meeting. Some time after Eutyches had broached his new opinions, and an assembly of bishops at Ephesus was to be held upon them, St. Leo wrote a long doctrinal epistle upon the subject to St. Flavian. That epistle Dioscorus had suppressed in his conventicle; it was now ordered to be read in the council. In this epistle the assembled Fathers of the Church found the Catholic doctrine upon the mystery of the Incarnation, that is to say, the identity of one only Person, and the distinction of two natures in Jesus Christ, so solidly established, conformably to the symbol of faith set forth by the two general councils of Nice and Constantinople, that they unanimously exclaimed, "This is the doctrine of our forefathers, this is the doctrine of the Apostles; it is Peter himself, who has spoken by the mouth of St. Leo." Expressive of this belief, they approved and signed a formulary, in which they unanimously declare, that to be orthodox we must confess one only Jesus Christ our Lord, true God and true Man, consubstantial with the Father according to his divinity, and consubstantial with us according to his humanity; so that He perfectly possesses two distinct natures, the one divine, which he has had from all eternity; the other human, which he received in the womb of Mary, his virgin mother, both united in one and the self-same Person, which is the second Person of the most blessed Trinity. Marcian received this

decision of the council of Chalcedon with the same respect as Constantine received that of Nice, and enforced it by imperial authority through all his dominions. After the definition of faith, the bishops enacted thirty canons of ecclesiastical discipline, the twenty-eighth of which assigns the second rank to the See of Constantinople. This canon was formed in the absence of the Papal legates, and vigorously opposed by them the next day, as an innovation and encroachment upon the prerogatives of other patriarchal Sees. St. Leo refused to confirm it, but by usage, in process of time, it obtained the force of law. Before they separated, the Fathers of the Council directed to St. Leo a synodical letter, in which they acknowledge him for the interpreter of St. Peter, for their head and guide. St. Leo, by his apostolical authority, confirmed all their decisions, with the sole exception of the said twenty-eighth canon, as appears from his letters.

The council of Chalcedon was not so peaceably received in the east as it was in the west. Notwithstanding the emperor's zeal for its support, it was not duly respected in Palestine and Egypt. By many of the oriental bishops it was absolutely rejected, by others it was let to lie unnoticed in a neutral state, neither rejected nor admitted. Their refusing to hear the Church, as Christ commands,* made them schismatics, and classed them with heathens and publicans: such, in fact, they are represented by the writers of that age. Pulcheria survived but two years; her eminent piety and religious deeds have merited her a place in the list of saints. She is the last of the illustrious house of Theodosius the Great, who swayed the sceptre of Constantinople. From that time all hereditary right to the imperial crown seems to have been set aside or overlooked. The

* Matt. c. xviii, v. 17.

emperor Marcian died four years after Pulcheria, in 457. His memory is in benediction on account of his virtues and the services he rendered to religion. Leo, a native of Thrace, succeeded him, and was crowned by Anatolius. The beginning of his reign was disturbed by the violences of Timothy, an Eutychian, who thrust himself into the See of Alexandria, and who, by his persecutions and anathemas against the Catholics, threw all Egypt into confusion. Similar commotions were likewise raised by the schismatics in other parts of the east, which the imperial power could not quell.

Upon the death of Leo, in 473, Zeno, his son-in-law, an Isaurian by birth, a man void of all principle and morality, pushed himself forward and mounted the throne. After a wicked and oppressive reign of seventeen years, Anastasius was advanced from a rank among the guards to succeed him. Anastasius had no personal merit to recommend him to so exalted a station, he even passed for a heretic, and had turned the sixty-fifth year of his age. But Ariana, the widow of the late emperor Zeno, and daughter of Leo, took him by the hand, married him, and by her interest placed him on the throne in 491. This emperor, who affected to be the friend of peace, would not declare either for or against the Eutychians, and was at once a tyrant and a persecutor of the Catholics. He perished in a thunder-storm, after a reign of twenty-seven years.

SECTION XV.

Fathers of the fifth Century.

(A. D. 500.) IN the course of the fifth century we have seen the eastern and western empires overrun by an irruption of barbarous invaders; we have seen their provinces plundered and dismembered from their ancient government; we have seen the western empire finally dissolved, and its former splendor totally extinguished. But, amidst the ruins of a fallen empire, the Church of Christ stood unhurt and unshaken, the same unblemished mystical spouse of the Lamb.* We have seen her faith attacked by Donatists, by Pelagians, by Nestorians, and Eutychians. But by the vigilance and vigor of her pastors, supported by the unerring Spirit of God, according to the promise of Christ,† truth and religion maintained their empire: their enemies, like dead limbs cut off from the mother stock, dropt to the ground and perished with disgrace. Amidst the confusion of the times, Divine Providence raised up many eminent men, who, by their learning, their miracles and virtues, illustrated and confirmed the purity of faith and morality invariably professed and taught by the holy Roman Catholic Church. In the east we behold a St. Cyril of Alexandria, an Isidore of Pelusium, a Theodoret, a St. Euthemius, a Simeon Stylites, a St. Sabas, with a host of sanctified solitaries in the deserts of Palestine, Syria, and Egypt. In the west we find a St. Jerom, a St. Austin, a St. Peter Chrysologus, a St. Vincent of Lerins, a Salvian of Marseilles, a St. Prosper, a St. Leo the Great, and a multitude of others of like happy memory, though less distinguished for learning.

* Rev. c. xx, v. 9.

† John, s. xv.

St. Jerom, a doctor of the church, and in some respects the most learned of the Latin Fathers, was born at Stridonum, a small town near the ancient Aquileia, in 329. Being sent by his father to Rome, for the advantage of a public education, he there laid a good foundation of classical and profane literature, which he afterwards improved by travelling and conversing with the most polished scholars of the age. His library was a choice collection of all the best authors, ancient and modern. But pleased as he was, with the elegance of those florid compositions, he found, upon experience, nothing sufficiently solid in them to content the pious longings of his soul; he found neither true wisdom nor the science of saints. He resolved to relinquish all earthly pursuits, and to devote himself wholly to the divine service. He made a vow of perpetual continency, went into the east in quest of solitude, visited Antioch, where Paulinus ordained him priest, passed from thence into Palestine, and concealed himself in a lonesome desert for four years. There he practised great austerities, studied the holy scriptures, and perfected himself in the Hebrew tongue under a Monk, who had been a Jew. Pope Damasus called him to Rome, and employed him as his secretary for some years. On the death of Damasus, in 384, he became once more his own master; his natural love for solitude drew him back to Palestine in 385. With a view of acquiring a perfect knowledge of the monastic life, he visited the religious communities of Egypt, and then settled at Bethlehem, in a monastery built for him by St. Paula, a rich Roman lady. There he spent the rest of his days in the meritorious exercise of a studious and devout life, till the year 420, when, at the age of ninety-one, he was called to receive the reward of his labors.

The writings of this holy doctor fill eleven volumes in folio; the most valuable of them are his elucidations of the holy scriptures. His version of the Bible, from the original Hebrew, has, in preference to all others, been adopted by the Church, under the name of the Latin Vulgate. The Latin version of the New Testament, he likewise revised and corrected by the Greek original. In his polemical writings, he solidly confutes the errors that were broached in his time against the primitive doctrines of the church. Such were the errors of Helvidius, an Arian presbyter of Milan, who impudently arraigned the perpetual virginity of Mary, the Virgin Mother of God. Such were the errors of Jovinian, an apostate monk, against the merits of virginity and fasting. Such were the errors of Vigilantius, an unworthy priest of Barcelona, who decried the merit of holy virginity, and condemned the invocation of saints, and the veneration of their relics, even so far as to declare all those to be idolaters and cinerarians, or worshippers of ashes, who paid this inferior honor to the saints. These erroneous positions St. Jerom refutes by the authority of the New Testament, by the sense and tradition of the Catholic Church, by the rule, in fine, of ecclesiastical discipline, which enjoins perpetual celibacy to the ministers of the altar, and which he saw observed in three patriarchates of Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. Respecting the honor paid to saints, he says, "We do not adore the relics of the martyrs, but we honor them, that we may adore Him whose martyrs they are. We honor the servants, that the respect which is paid to them may be reflected back upon the Lord. If the Apostles and martyrs, while living upon earth, can pray for other men, how much more may they do it after their victories?" This we see as the Catholic doctrine in the first ages; it is the same in this. Jovinian cavilled against it in

the fourth age; John Calvin repeated his cavils in the sixteenth age; the loud voice of antiquity contradicts and confutes them both.

St. Augustin was cotemporary with St. Jerom, his rival in repute for piety and learning. He was born at Tagaste, a small town of Numidia, in Africa, in 354. In his youth, he went headlong into vice; thus blinded by passion, he fell into heresy, and professed himself a Manichean. Fond of eloquence, he taught rhetoric at Tagaste, at Carthage, at Rome, and Milan. At Milan he became acquainted with St. Ambrose, and attended his sermons. The truths he heard made a deep impression upon his soul, he entered seriously into himself, obeyed the voice that called him from his evil habits, and in the spirit of a sincere penitent received baptism from the hand of that holy prelate in 387. After this he returned to Africa, distributed his goods to the poor, established a community of religious men in the town of Hippo, and lived amongst them. In 391 he entered into holy orders, and four years after was consecrated bishop of Hippo. Placed in that high station as a light to shine before men, St. Austin then began to display his learning and zeal in repelling the various attacks upon the Church by Pagans, Manicheans, Predestinarians, Arians, Donatists, and Pelagians. The vast extent of his literary undertakings has swelled his writings to eleven folio volumes, in which he unfolds such strength of genius, and such a fund of erudition, joined with such humble sentiments of himself, and such noble sentiments of God, that he is justly styled even by those of the reformed church "the greatest of all the Fathers, and the worthiest Divine the Church of God ever had since the Apostles' time."* In various parts of his writings, St. Austin frequently mentions purgatory,

* Dr. Field, Dr. Conel, Luther, &c.

strongly recommends prayer and sacrifice for the faithful departed, teaches the intercession of saints, speaks of their relics, of the honor due to them, and of the miracles which he himself had seen wrought by them. He died in the year 430, aged seventy-six.

Less voluminous than the two fore-mentioned authors, but more eloquent and more sublime, appears St. Leo, surnamed the Great. His thoughts are just, bright, and strong; his diction pure and elegant; his period well rounded; his style concise, clear, and pleasing. His piety and theological knowledge equally instruct and edify the reader in the 196 sermons, and the 141 doctrinal epistles which compose his works in one folio volume. With admirable fortitude and prudence he governed the church in times the most difficult, from the year 440 to 461. St. Hilarius succeeded him.

St. Peter, surnamed Chrysologus, acquired great reputation by his golden eloquence in the pulpit, was happily clear and concise in his diction, as his sermons show. He was bishop of Ravenna from the year 433 to 458.

About the time of the council of Chalcedon, the name of Patriarch began to grow into use, and it was employed to express the extended jurisdiction of a bishop over the whole, or a considerable part of the Catholic Church. To the bishop of Rome only this title is applied in its full extent, because to him alone, in quality of successor to St. Peter, is given the divine right of feeding the whole flock of Christ. To the bishops of Alexandria and Antioch was also given the like title of Patriarch, with ecclesiastical jurisdiction limited to a certain extent of territory. The like dignity was afterwards allowed to the bishops of Jerusalem and Constantinople. The latter obtained even the second rank after Rome. After the Patriarchs come other ecclesiastical dignitaries, with ordinary jurisdiction, in the following order,

the Primates, the Metropolitans or Archbishops, and lastly, the Parish-priests, who, under the authority of the bishops, have the care of souls. Such is the hierarchy of the Catholic Church. All of the episcopal order have their spiritual courts, from which, in certain cases, there is a right to appeal. The privilege of appealing from an inferior to a higher court is always free: the last appeal is to the Pope, the supreme pastor of the faithful, the head of Christ's Church, and the centre of Catholic unity.

24*

CENTURY VI.

SECTION I.

Conversion of the Franks.

(A. D. 511.) **AFTER** the death of **St. Hilarius** the chair of **St. Peter** was filled in succession by **St. Simplicius**, **St. Felix II.**, **St. Gelasius**, **St. Anastasius** and **St. Symmachus**, to whom the institution of ecclesiastical benefices, granted to the clergy for life, owes its origin.

Between the two epochs, when Gaul first yielded to the arms of **Julius Cæsar**, and was lastly deluged by an inundation of barbarians, a period is included of about four hundred years. During that space of time the Gauls had gradually assumed the language, the habits and privileges of citizens of Rome. The liberal studies were cultivated in the schools of **Bourdeaux** and **Autun**. In Gaul, as well as in the other western provinces of the empire, the Latin tongue was spoken with elegance, till corrupted by the Germanic idiom. The Christian religion was there planted at an early period, and continued to flourish with great lustre, as appears from the eminent men it produced, both for sanctity and learning, till its glory was sullied by the vices of Arian and idolatrous invaders, who fiercely strove for the possession of its fairest provinces. From the barren mountains of **Franconia** swarmed a colony of hardy warriors, who seized upon the country that is watered by the lower Rhine. About the year 420 they are said to have been under the command of a leader called **Pharamond**, whom the modern French style their first king, but of whom

history furnishes very little to be relied on. Clovis, the son of Childeric, his great grandson, claims the honor, with a better title, of being the founder of the French monarchy.

Clovis was a youth of a bold, aspiring genius, when he succeeded his father Ghilderic, in 481, as king of the Franks. Though no more than fifteen years of age, he put himself at the head of his troops, not very formidable in number, but resolute in action, crossed the Rhine, and attacked Syagrius, who presided over a considerable tract of country in the Roman name. Clovis was victorious; the accession of territory to his hereditary dominions increased his strength, and enabled him to undertake new conquests. The last spark of the civil power of Rome was now extinct in Gaul; the conquering Frank gave it the name of France.

In the year 493 Clovis married Clotilda, the daughter of Chilperic, and niece of Condebaud, king of the Burgundians. Clotilda was a virtuous princess and a Catholic, though born and educated amidst professed Arians; she was now married to a Pagan. By example and discourse, she first sought to soften the rugged temper of her husband, then by the persuasive powers of reason and religion she gradually disposed him to become a Christian. The fruit of the marriage was a son, whom she caused to be baptised. The child died within the week; the Pagan father attributed his death to the waters of baptism. It was with great difficulty that she disabused him of his error. In the course of time she produced another son, and notwithstanding the king's opposition, had it baptised. Unluckily the infant fell sick; the king grew furious; but the mother's prayer saved the sick infant. She never ceased, from that time, to exhort her husband to quit his idols, the manufactured works of men, and to acknowledge the true God, the omnipotent creator of heaven and earth, and of all things in them. She could not

yet prevail, but still had grounds to hope. For Clovis in his conquests treated the Christians with kindness, spared their churches, and respected their bishops, which she considered as a happy presage of his conversion.

A martial prince of Germany suddenly broke into the French territory. Clovis marched against him, and encountered him in the plain of Tolbiac, twenty-four miles from Cologne. The battle was obstinate and bloody; his men gave way, and the shouts of victory spread among the German ranks. In that critical juncture Clovis called aloud upon the God of Clotilda, and solemnly vowed to make himself a Christian should he gain the day. Jesus Christ accepted his vow, and turned the scale of victory. The Germans yielded in their turn and fled. The death of their king, who fell in that battle, put the conqueror in possession of a territory that extended to the Elbe. The grateful monarch hastened to fulfil his vow. After full instruction in the principles of Catholic belief, he repaired to Rheims, where the venerable bishop Remigius was ready to baptise him. The feast of our Lord's nativity, in the year 496, was the day appointed for the solemn ceremony, which was performed in the cathedral with every circumstance of pious magnificence that could impress an awful sense of religion upon the minds of the spectators. About three thousand of his warlike followers were baptised at the same time. On that day the church received a Catholic king within her bosom, the only one at that time existing in the Christian world. For Anastasius, the emperor of the east, was an Eutychian; and the crowned despots of Africa, of Italy, of Spain, and the rest of Gaul, were professed Arians.

Baptism altered not the political and military plans of Clovis. With his usual ardor he pursued his schemes of

conquest. Within the course of twelve years Armorica, Burgundy, Aquitain, and all the country lying between the Loire and the Pyrenees, submitted to his arms, and owned him for their sovereign. He made Paris his royal residence, and the capital of his kingdom. There, after an active and glorious reign of thirty years, he died in 511, and was buried in the church he had built in honor of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul. Twenty-five years after his death, the emperor Justinian signed a formal treaty, by which he yielded to the Franks the sovereignty of the countries beyond the Alps, released the provincials from all tie of allegiance to the empire, and established on a legal, though not more solid foundation, the hereditary throne of Clovis and his successors. Then was the distinction of Goth, of Burgundian, of Gaul, and Vandal laid aside, and all were moulded into one general mass of Franks or Frenchmen. France at that time was divided into a hundred dioceses, governed in spiritual matters by as many bishops, under the supremacy of the bishop of Rome. In that See the succession of bishops after St. Symmachus counts St. Hormisdas, St. John, St. Felix III., Boniface, St. John II., St. Agapetus, St. Sylverius, to the year 538.

SECTION II.

St. Benedict.

(A. D. 529.) THE monastic institution, which for two hundred years had flourished with so much celebrity in the east, began to extend through the west towards the beginning of the sixth century. To worldly men, who confine

their narrow views of happiness to earthly enjoyments only, as if they were created for no other, the mortified life of a recluse may perchance appear to be mere folly, or an error in devotion. A Luther or a Calvin will call it superstition. But as the sublime and noble aim of an immortal soul is nothing less than everlasting happiness with God in his heavenly kingdom, the adoption of means the most conducive to that exalted end must certainly be deemed a rational and prudent step. To wean our affections from vain and sinful objects, to lift the mind above all earthly pursuit, to sanctify the soul by pious habits of devotion, and to quicken her desire of loving and serving God in the most perfect manner, is the exercise and end of a monastic life. "If thou wilt be perfect,"* said our blessed Lord to the young man, who wished to know what was wanting in him for the perfection of his virtue, "go sell what thou hast, give it to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven : and come, follow me." Such is the counsel given by divine wisdom, and whoever, on mature deliberation, chooses to follow it, surely cannot be said to mistake his object.

Egypt, which had afforded an asylum to the infant Jesus in his flight from the sword of Herod, received numbers of his faithful followers, who fled to lonesome deserts for protection against the rage of persecuting tyrants. There, in silent solitude, and in the evangelical renunciation of worldly vanities, they cultivated the virtues of an ascetic and contemplative life. These were called hermits or anchorets. St. Antony, a native of lower Thebais, was the first who drew these devout solitaries together into religious communities. They then obtained a new name, and were called Monks, or Cenobites. He gave them no written rule ; but by verbal instruction and example he trained

Matt. c. xix:

them to the practice of pure virtues in an eminent degree. In the barren deserts of Nitria no less than fifty monasteries were erected by the disciples of St. Antony. In upper Thebais, the uninhabited wilderness of Tabenna was occupied by St. Pachomius and fourteen hundred of his brethren. This holy abbot successively founded nine monasteries for men, and one for women, who religiously followed a written rule, which he gave them for the uniform observance of monastic order. From Egypt the spirit spread over the sands of Libya, through the dreary wilds of Syria and Palestine, to Pontus, and along the coast of the Euxine sea. St. Athanasius introduced the practice into the west at the time that he went to Rome, attended by some of St. Antony's disciples. The illustrious St. Martin of Tours promoted it in Gaul. Great Britain received it, as the celebrated monastery of Bangor, in North Wales, testifies. In Africa, the religious order of the hermits of St. Austin dates its foundation from the year 388. They followed a monastic rule, which that enlightened doctor penned down for their observance.

But the most renowned founder of monastic discipline in the west is St. Benedict, or Bennet. He was born in the year 480, of noble parents, at Norcia, a town in Umbria. At a proper age for study, his father sent him to the public schools at Rome. Ignorant of vice till that time, he was shocked at the licentious conduct he observed in some of the Roman youths. To preserve his innocence he resolved to forsake the world, as soon as he should become his own master. He accordingly took an opportunity to quit his father's house, and secretly retired to the mountains of Sublacum, forty miles from Rome. There he met with a monk of a neighboring monastery, called Romanus, who gave him the monastic habit with suitable instructions, and

conducted him to a narrow cave, formed by nature in the rock. Here, unknown to all the world, except Romanus, the young hermit passed three years. He was at last accidentally discovered by some shepherds, who reported his name and sanctity through the country. Many came to visit him, to whom he gave suitable instructions. His repute for holiness of life became general. The monks of a monastery in the neighborhood chose him to replace their deceased abbot. His endeavors to introduce regularity amongst them did not please; they soon wished to get rid of him; he willingly went back to his beloved solitude. Benedict was now famed, not only for sanctity, but for the gift of miracles. The instructive exhortations he made to his numerous visitors wrought wonderful conversions. Many put themselves under his direction, and embraced his manner of life. In a short time the desert of Sublacum swarmed with devout solitaries, whom he gathered into communities in twelve different houses, each of which had its own superior. The success that attended these religious establishments, provoked the jealousy of a neighboring priest, who seemed to delight in giving the inoffensive founder all the disturbance in his power. For the sake of peace, the humble Benedict retired from Sublacum to Mount Cassino.

Cassino is a small town in the kingdom of Naples, situated upon the declivity of a high mountain. On the summit of the mountain St. Benedict found an old abandoned temple of Apollo, surrounded by a grove. He took possession of the place, cut down the grove, demolished the temple, and upon the same spot laid the foundation of the famous abbey of Mount Cassino, in the year 529. Here he fixed his residence for life; he died in 443.

For the stability of monastic discipline, St. Benedict composed a rule which has for its basis prayer, solitude, humility, and obedience. By this rule the abbot is charged with the whole government of the monastery, over which he presides; perpetual abstinence from flesh is enjoined, seven hours in the day are allotted for manual labor, and two for pious reading, besides meditation from the end of the nocturnal office to the beginning of Lauds, about break of day. To the former labors of these religious men, England stands much indebted for the improvement of her waste lands.

SECTION III.

Reduction of Africa.

(A. D. 535.) GENSERIC, the Arian tyrant and scourge of Africa, returned from the conquest of Rome loaded with rich spoils, and carrying with him amongst his captives, as has been mentioned, the unhappy empress, Eudoxia, and her two daughters, Eudocia and Placidia. He married Eudocia to his eldest son, Hunneric, and sent her sister and the empress mother soon after to Constantinople, at the request of Marcian. The other Roman captives experienced the most inhuman treatment: left to the mercy of savage Moors and Vandals, they were reduced to the condition of slaves; husbands were torn from their wives, and children from their parents. Genseric, naturally ferocious and despotic, expected implicit obedience from all his subjects, in religious as well as in civil matters: he required that at his nod all should embrace and profess what he professed, the tenets of

Arius. In that he found the Africans not so pliant as he wished. Vexed to see himself openly resisted in the church, by those very men who had fled before him in the field, he had recourse to violent measures, hoping thereby to overthrow their faith with the same ease as he had overthrown their liberty. The sight of tortures, and a cruel death, vanquished many weak believers, who preferred a short respite from present sufferings to the hope of endless happiness, while thousands of courageous champions bravely chose to sacrifice their fortunes, their ease, and lives, rather than basely deny the divinity of their Redeemer. Africa ceased not to flow with the blood of martyrs, as long as the tyrant lived. He died in 477, forty-nine years after he landed in Africa, at the solicitation of Count Boniface.

Hunneric, his inglorious son, who inherited his vices and his crown, began his reign by holding out some glimmering hope of moderation. At the request of Placidia, his sister-in-law, and Zeno, the emperor of Constantinople, he permitted Eugenius to be consecrated for the See of Carthage, which had been without a bishop for four and twenty years. This gleam of sunshine quickly vanished; the Catholics soon found that they had no favor to expect; a violent persecution broke out in every kind of cruelty. Under severe penalties, all exercise of the Catholic religion was forbidden through the whole extent of Africa, no churches were suffered to be open unless for Arians, no bishops or priests to be ordained: and had not a zeal for God's honor and the salvation of souls inspired the bishops with a courage superior to the terrors of imprisonment, of tortures, of confiscations, of banishment, and death, the orthodox church of Africa must have ended with the present generation. The tyrant enjoyed the savage sport of torturing and destroying his best subjects but for seven years, when a miserable

death, like that of king Antiochus, snatched him from the world.

The death of Hunneric gave no respite to the faithful; a rage for persecution was hereditary in the Vandal race. His two nephews, Gondamund and Thrasimond, swayed the sceptre in succession, one after the other, who for nine and thirty years continued to exhibit the same scenes of barbarous oppression. The shocking variety of torments that were practised, marks at once the fortitude of suffering martyrs, and the brutality of their persecutors. Some had their ears, some their nose, others their tongue and right hand cut off; noble matrons and consecrated virgins were stript naked, then bound by their hands with cords, and raised by pulleys from the ground with heavy weights at their feet; suspended in that painful and ignominious posture, their bodies were torn with whips, or burnt in the most tender parts with red hot plates of iron. Numbers were crowded together, without being able to stir, in close dungeons, where the filth and stench soon became worse than death itself. Thousands were driven like herds of cattle into the great desert, there to perish in want and misery. The death of Thrasimond, in 523, put an end to the dreadful persecution. His cousin, Hilderic, the gentle son of Hunneric and Eudocia, ascended the throne; although an Arian, he restored the Catholic bishops, and allowed his subjects the free exercise of the Catholic religion. Gilimer, his kinsman and his heir, envied him his crown and moderation; for he himself was an intolerant Arian. He rebelled and dethroned him, after a peaceful reign of seven years.

The emperor Justinian had long beheld with an indignant eye the outrages committed by Vandal usurpers, in a province which, by right, belonged to the empire. He seized the opportunity, which Gilimer's usurpation gave him, of

breaking the peace that subsisted between the two crowns, and of declaring war. He had a fleet of five hundred vessels ready for sea; he put a select body of troops on board, under the command of Belisarius, and ordered them to sail for the African coast. The imperial general landed his troops without opposition from the enemy, who did not expect him, and directed his march to Carthage. Gilymer made but a weak resistance; the Vandal army fled almost as soon as attacked, and left him prisoner in the hands of the conqueror. The whole country submitted without further struggle. Thus ended the Vandal kingdom of Africa, after it had lasted 107 years, and that fertile province was again united to the Roman empire, in the year 535. Belisarius, at his return to Constantinople, had the honor of a triumph. Amongst other trophies of his victory, carried in the procession, were the sacred vessels of the ancient temple of Jerusalem, which Titus had brought from thence to Rome, and Genseric from Rome to Carthage. Justinian ordered them to be conveyed back to Jerusalem.

The year before the reduction of Africa, Justinian published a complete edition of his celebrated work, the Justinian Code, which has acquired him a more lasting fame than all his victories over the Persians, Goths, and Vandals. It is a body or collection of Roman laws, to which he has added a digest of select decisions made by learned judges and magistrates, which were dispersed in near two thousand books, and are reduced by him to the number of fifty, called the *Digesta*, or *Pandectæ*. He likewise published four books of institutes, and one volume of new laws. For the execution of these works he employed the best lawyer of his time, and the principal officers of the empire.

SECTION IV.

Fifth general Council at Constantinople.

(A. D. 553.) WE have mentioned the strong opposition made by the Eutychians against the Council of Chalcedon: that opposition increased under the two reigns of Zeno and Anastasius, which include a space of forty-five years. Zeno weakly fancied that his imperial authority alone would be sufficient to silence the disputes that divided the oriental churches, and published a conciliary edict for that purpose. Instead of peace, greater confusion ensued; heresy was emboldened; the liberty of religion was oppressed; Catholic bishops were expelled, and Eutychians thrust into their places. Peter Moggus succeeded Timothy in usurping the See of Alexandria; Peter, the fuller, invaded that of Antioch, and Acacius possessed that of Constantinople, all three Eutychians, and violent oppugners of the Council of Chalcedon. Pope Felix, II., excommunicated them for their impiety and heresy. Such was the turbid state of religion in the east, under Zeno, and such it continued under his successor, Anastasius, till the year 518, when Justinus succeeded to the throne. Justinus, a Thracian of low birth, but of sound faith, had risen by merit from a private soldier to the first rank in the army. Popular favor raised him to the throne; his conduct proved him worthy of the high station he filled, though so illiterate as not to know how to read. The first concern of this Catholic emperor was to check the insolence of the Eutychians, and to procure a re-union of the oriental churches with the See of Rome. He succeeded happily in both. After a prosperous reign of eight years, he left the crown to his sister's son, the famed Justinian. Justinian professed himself the protector of the church; but a

natural inclination to meddle and decide in ecclesiastical matters beyond his sphere, rendered him, in many instances, its oppressor and persecutor. His false zeal for peace never can excuse the violences he committed against the holy Popes St. Agapetus, St. Silverius, and Vigilius. The warmth with which he took up the subject of the Three Chapters, was the rock on which he imprudently dashed.

To understand this matter clearly, the reader must know, that in the beginning of the controversy between St. Cyril and Nestorius, three publications appeared, which either openly or covertly contained the principles of Nestorianism, and which, in ecclesiastical history, go under the name of the Three Chapters. They are the writings of Theodore, bishop of Mopsuesta; the letter of Ibas, bishop of Edessa, to Maris; and the dissertations of Theodoret, bishop of Cyr, against St. Cyril. These writings brought their authors into a suspicion of being Nestorians both in fact and principle. When the Council of Chalcedon was called to examine the doctrine of Eutyches, Theodoret and Ibas there appeared among the other bishops; Theodore was dead. Some objections being started against Theodoret and Ibas, as tainted with Nestorianism, the Council called upon them for their profession of faith, and required that they should pronounce anathema against Nestorius and his doctrine. They did so; the council was satisfied, and declared them orthodox. Of their writings nothing was said; these were neither denounced nor examined into. The Eutychians represented this omission as a criminal oversight, from whence they drew the invidious but false conclusion, that the Council of Chalcedon had erred in a capital point, that its subsequent decisions were therefore null, and ought to be set aside. This was their aim, and this they hoped to compass by the emperor's authority. Of the emperor's readiness

to act in the affair they had no doubt: but in an affair of that nature they knew the imperial authority was not sufficient, and that nothing effectual could be done without the Pope's concurrence. They addressed themselves to the empress Theodora, who held an absolute sway over her husband Justinian, and was wholly at their devotion.

Sylverius was Pope. To him Theodora despatched an imperial mandate, that he should either condemn the Council of Chalcedon, and receive the Eutychians into his communion, or repair immediately to Constantinople, and there revise the cause of Anthimus the patriarch. Anthimus had been canonically deposed for his adherence to the Eutychian heresy, and Mennas, a holy man, had been ordained by Agapetus, the late Pope, to replace him. Sylverius, in a short and peremptory answer, let the empress know that he could not obey her commands without betraying the Catholic faith, which he would not do. Theodora saw, by the firmness of this answer, that nothing favorable to her schemes was to be expected from so steady a Pontiff; she resolved to depose him.

Vigilius, an archdeacon of the Roman Church, who had been employed by St. Agapetus at the court of Constantinople, was still there in a private capacity, a man of fine address, a devoted courtier, and ready to catch at any proposal that flattered his ambition or his avarice. The empress, who had watched his dispositions, thought him a fit tool for the execution of her schemes. She promised to make him Pope, if he would but engage to condemn the Council of Chalcedon, and to receive the Eutychians into his communion. The tiara was a tempting bait; the venal deacon readily caught at it, and pledged his word. She prepared her despatches, and sent him off with them to Belisarius, who commanded the imperial army in Italy, and

had lately taken possession of Rome in the name of Justinian. The despatches contained an express order for the General to strip Sylverius of the Pontificate, and to place Vigilius in his stead. With the meanness of a low sycophant, the great Belisarius consented to stain the lustre of his victories, by an act the most tyrannical and unchristian. For no other cause than that of having done his duty contrary to the wishes of an imperious woman, Sylverius, the peaceful vicar of Jesus Christ, was deposed by the rough hand of a soldier, and banished into the barren island of Palmaria, where he died soon after for want of food. Belisarius then compelled some of the Roman clergy to make a sham election in favor of Vigilius. The simoniacal intruder got himself ordained bishop, and, without the shadow of a title, mounted the Papal throne. He stole into St. Peter's chair like a thief; the faithful looked upon him as a mercenary partizan and no pastor, as long as St. Sylverius was alive. But after the death of that holy martyr, Vigilius sincerely repented of his past guilty conduct, broke off all communication with the Eutychians, refused to execute the wicked promise that he had made to Theodora, was changed, in fine, into a new man, and became a strenuous defender of the Catholic faith, for which he suffered cruel hardships. His election was either canonically confirmed by the Roman clergy, or tacitly admitted by the church. He was universally acknowledged Pope.

The disputes among the bishops, about the Three Chapters, were carried on all this while with great warmth and difference of opinion. The western bishops, particularly in Africa, in Illyricum, and Dalmatia, defended those writings, as containing nothing against faith. The Catholic bishops in the east, who were better versed in the Greek tongue and in the nature of the dispute, could not approve those writings,

yet were afraid of condemning them, lest they should thereby weaken the authority of the Council of Chalcedon, and afford matter of triumph to the Eutychian faction. The Eutychians saw this, and therefore, with all the interest of Theodora added to their own, urged the emperor to condemn the Three Chapters by a public edict, assuring him there were no other means of ending the disputes. Justinian, with his usual eagerness to engage in theological disquisitions, published a profession of faith, in which he denounces anathema against the writings of Theodoret, in which St. Cyril is attacked, against the letter of Ibas, and against the person as well as the writings of Theodore. Of the persons of Theodoret and Ibas he said nothing. It is to be remembered that the Council of Chalcedon had made no mention of the writings of these two authors, nor of the person of Theodore, consequently its authority is not in the least arraigned by the imperial edict. The Eutychians, however, maintained that the edict amounted to an equivalent condemnation of the council, and that the merits of the council were involved in the merits of the Three Chapters. Their pretensions were vain, as the event has shown.

Justinian called upon the bishops to sign his edict. St. Mennas, bishop of Constantinople, after some difficulty, signed it; his example drew many others; many refused, and strange confusion was the consequence. In this state of affairs, 546, Justinian called the Pope Vigilius to Constantinople. He arrived in January the following year, but refused to communicate with St. Mennas and his subscribers. At the end of five months he grew reconciled; the party then hazarded the proposal for him to subscribe the edict, and condemn the Three Chapters as they had done. This, at first, he positively refused to do: but worn down, at length, by incessant importunities, he thought he might condescend with

a safe conscience to humor them in a pure matter of fact, where faith was not concerned. In a public deed, called his "Judicatum," Vigilius condemned the Three Chapters under the saving clause, "without prejudice to the Council of Chalcedon." The Judicatum gave offence to both parties. Violent commotions arose; strong symptoms of schism appeared, personal insults and outrages were heaped upon Vigilius.

Vigilius had now no longer hopes of peace; he proposed to Justinian the convocation of a general council, at which the bishops of the west should jointly assist with those of the east. The emperor issued letters for that effect. Two hundred and fifty bishops obeyed the summons, all from the east, except five from Africa. The Pope seeing so many bishops from the east, and so few from the west, refused to assist at the council, for fear of giving scandal to his absent brethren of the west, who mostly differed in opinion from the orientals upon the point in dispute; he promised to deliver his sentiments separately, and in writing. The council met for the first time on the fourth of May, 553. St. Eutyches, the successor of St. Mennas, in the See of Constantinople, seems to have presided. In eight sessions, which are called conferences, the Three Chapters were minutely examined and discussed. Several propositions in them, found to be erroneous, were condemned, as containing or favoring the principles of Nestorius. But the fathers of the council, before they pronounced the sentence of condemnation, expressly confirmed the Council of Chalcedon, and placed its authority upon a level with that of the three first general councils, by which means they effectually guarded against every plea that the Eutychians might think of setting up to elude their own condemnation. Vigilius, in a pastoral letter, confirmed the sentence of the council in

condemning the Three Chapters, but spared the persons of Theodoret and Ibas, whom the Council of Chalcedon had admitted to be orthodox.

Thus was the subject of long and acrimonious disputes happily terminated, and internal harmony restored to the church. The Greek original of this council is not in the Vatican : we have only an ancient Latin version, in which the condemnation of the errors of Origen is not mentioned : yet it is certain, that they were condemned in this fifth council at the solicitation of the patriarch of Jerusalem, where those errors were in vogue. Vigilius had now nothing more to do at Constantinople ; he had been seven years absent from Rome ; he set off upon his return, but got no farther than Syracuse, in Sicily, and there died, anno 555. He had for successors in the Pontifical Chair, Pelagius, John III., Benedict, Pelagius II. and St. Gregory the Great.

SECTION V.

Gothic Kings of the West.

(A. D. 586.) THE Gothic nation, which stretched along the eastern and western banks of the Danube, became acquainted with the Catholic faith in the reign of Constantine the Great. Religion there flourished for near fifty years ; Ulphilas, their bishop, labored with great zeal and profit amongst them, till being grievously persecuted by one of their idolatrous kings, they applied to the emperor Valens, for leave to pass the Danube, and settle in Thrace. Ulphilas went to Constantinople on that commission, and

succeeded ; but having been unfortunately prevailed upon to join the Arian party, he carried back the errors of Arius amongst his flock ; and as he was universally respected in the country, the people gave implicit credit to the doctrine he preached, so that in a few years Arianism became the predominant religion of the Goths. Hence the seed of Arianism was planted in all the provinces of the west wherever the Goths carried their victorious arms.

Odoacer, who founded the Gothic kingdom of Italy upon the ruins of the empire, reigned peaceably in Ravenna, till the year 493, when he was deprived both of his crown and life by Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths. Theodoric was an Arian, but left every one free to follow the dictates of his own conscience, as his predecessor had done. He is even celebrated for the protection he gave to Catholics against his Arian officers, and for his other princely virtues. The execution of Symachus and Boetius, two noble senators, whom he despotically ordered to be put to death without the shadow of a crime, has left an indelible blot upon his character. He died in the year 526, and appointed Athalaric, his grandson, to succeed him on the throne. After him, Theodalus, a weak and wicked prince, obtained the crown. Under him, the strength of the Gothic kingdom in Italy, sunk into a very languid state ; this encouraged Justinian to attempt its conquest. Belisarius, the conqueror of Africa, commanded the expedition. Sicily, and the lower part of Italy, quickly yielded to his victorious arms : Rome, at his approach, opened her gates, and acknowledged Justinian for her sovereign in 536. The Gothic chiefs offered the crown to Belisarius, which he nobly refused and which Vitiges assumed, but was compelled to relinquish in 538. The vanquished Goths remained quiet, as long as Belisarius staid in Italy, but after his departure, they rallied

again, chose Evaric first, and then Totila for their king. Totila reduced the country to his obedience, took the city of Rome, razed its walls to the ground, and plundered it twice, first in 546, and a second time in 549. These outrages roused Justinian out of his theological slumber, and determined him to send an army into Italy. Narses had the command; he engaged, defeated, and slew the Goth in 552. With Totila, fell the Gothic race of kings in Italy, and Rome, by right of conquest, became subject to the emperor of Constantinople. The emperor governed by a deputy lieutenant, called Exarch, who fixed his residence at Ravenna. The walls of Rome were rebuilt, a wise and necessary precaution against the future insults of foreign enemies.

Justinian died in 565, after a reign of near forty years, and was succeeded by his weak and profligate nephew, Justin II. Two years after, Italy was overrun by a horde of barbarians, who, from their long beards, or according to others, from their long halberts, are called Longobardi or Lombards. They burst from the forests of Hungary, under the command of Albion, their king. They were Arians, and collecting in their march vast numbers of Pagan savages, they committed horrid outrages wherever they came. The unprotected Italians were too weak to resist; the Lombards made themselves masters of the whole country, excepting the fortified cities of Rome and Ravenna.

The evils occasioned by the Goths in Spain, were happily terminated. For the space of 173 years, from the invasion of Ataulph in 414, to the conversion of king Recared in 587, Spain exhibited a long series of sieges, of battles, and bloody struggles for superiority. A general licentiousness of manners followed the Gothic bands. The once flourishing church of Spain was now disgraced with every kind of

vice; Arianism every where prevailed; profligate kings encouraged the bishops and their clergy to acts of immorality, that they might prevent all reproof from the pulpit; wickedness, by example, spread like wildfire among the people. In the year 567, Leovigild reigned sole monarch of Spain. He had two sons, Hermenegild and Recared. With a view of securing to his family the royal crown, which had hitherto been elective, he surrendered a part of his domain to his eldest son, Hermenegild, and made him an independent king. The young prince, who was married to a Catholic princess of France, and had informed himself of the true faith of Christ, renounced the errors of Arianism, and was received into the Catholic Communion by St. Leander, bishop of Seville.

Leovigild was highly incensed to see his son abandon the belief of his forefathers; he took the desperate resolution to strip him either of his crown or of his faith. The rights of conscience and his crown were prerogatives which the royal convert conceived to be indisputably his own, and to be defended against the unjust aggression even of a father. Both parties took the field; they fought; the son was worsted, taken, and consigned to a prison. His father tried every inducement to bring him back to the Arian communion; he offered to forget all that was past, and to restore him to favor and to former honors, if he would only consent to receive communion from the hand of an Arian bishop at the great festival of Easter, which was now approaching. A bishop went by order to the prince in prison, and endeavored to persuade him into a compliance. The well-instructed prince upbraided the Arian for his impiety, and rejected his sacrilegious offer. Enraged at the report, the unnatural father gave an order for his son's immediate death. No time was lost; the bloody executioner repaired in haste to

the prison, and with one stroke of his hatchet clove the royal martyr's skull in two. The old king, upon reflection, expressed a sorrow for what he had too hastily done, owned the Catholic religion to be the true one, but from human considerations had not the resolution to embrace it. During his last illness in the following year, 587, he sent for Leander, the holy bishop of Seville, and earnestly requested that he would be careful to instruct his son Recared in the Catholic faith. The docile Recared believed, abjured his former errors, and, within the compass of a few years, brought over all his Arian subjects to the true faith of Christ.

SECTION VI.

Heptarchy of England.

(A. D. 585.) Or all the various revolutions which the western provinces of the Roman empire had undergone for the last hundred and sixty years, none was so complete as that of Great Britain. In the other dismembered provinces we have seen new kingdoms rise, new rulers, and new forms of government established, heavy oppressions indeed, and cruel outrages committed; yet a remnant of the former order of things was still preserved, and an intercourse kept up between the conquerors and the conquered. Barbarous invaders sat down with the former citizens of Rome, content to share the common advantages of the country with them, without expelling or exterminating their race. But in the revolution of Britain, all was new. The Saxons fought, not for dominion, but for possession. Their savage policy was not simply to subdue, but to exterminate. That

policy they barbarously pursued; religion, laws, and inhabitants vanished as they extended their conquests. The fields of battle might be traced in almost every district by monuments of human bones; the churches were either demolished or converted into Pagan temples; the whole country, as far as the mountains of Wales, was depopulated by the slaughter, or the flight of its ancient possessors, and occupied by a new nation. Small, as our island is, it was divided by gradual conquest into no fewer than seven independent kingdoms, called the Heptarchy, besides what remained to the native Britons.

To show the regular progress of the Heptarchy from its first beginning, we must look as far back as the reign of king Vortigern, who invited the Saxons into Britain to fight against the Caledonians. That wicked king, at his marriage with Rowena, bestowed the government of Kent upon Hengist, the lady's father, a foreigner and a Pagan. By the continual arrival of fresh Saxons, Hengist thought himself sufficiently strong, in the space of a few years, to claim the rights of an independent prince. He rebelled, he threw off all allegiance, and founded the first Saxon kingdom of Kent, in the year 457.

The Britons now saw the danger into which their weak sovereign had betrayed them; after his death, in 466, they chose Ambrosius to command them, as their general or their king. Ambrosius was of Roman extraction, endowed with courage to undertake, as well as with skill to manage the defence of the country. He held the reins of government for two and thirty years, during all which time he had a combined and stubborn host of invaders to contend with; and although he gave them many a check and many an overthrow, yet they still came on with new reinforcements, that arrived incessantly from the continent. By a hard and

persevering struggle, numbers at last prevailed ; and in the year 491, Ella founded the second Saxon kingdom, which included Sussex and Surrey.

After the death of Ambrosius, in 498, the supreme command devolved on his brother, Uther Pendragon, who reigned ten years, and at last nobly fell in battle, fighting for his country. His active and gallant conduct prevented the Saxons from gaining any ground during his time. He was succeeded by his renowned son, king Arthur, of whom many entertaining and fabulous exploits are told by the romancing writers of succeeding ages. King Arthur had a long and arduous reign, from the year 508 to 542. During that period he was constantly engaged with the enemy, over whom he gained twelve pitched battles. These defeats retarded, but did not prevent the ultimate success of the obstinate invaders. In the year 519 Cerdic established the kingdom of the West Saxons, and eight years after Erchenwin established that of the East Saxons ; this comprehended Middlesex, Essex, and part of Hertfordshire ; that of the West Saxons included Berkshire, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Somersetshire, Dorsetshire, and Devonshire, to which Cornwall was added some time after.

With the valiant Arthur fell the spirit and support of Britain. Constantine, his successor, had neither talents nor conduct to stop the rapid decline of his country. In 547 the victorious Idda erected a fifth kingdom, which comprised the six northern counties, as they now stand in the geography of England.

The sixth kingdom, called that of the East Angles, was founded by Uffa, in the year 575 ; it contained Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire, and the isle of Ely. This kingdom in process of time gave the name of England to the whole Saxon conquest.

The last of those Saxon chiefs, who raised their achievements into a monarchy, was Cerda. This successful warrior, by pushing his military operations into the very heart of the island, founded the kingdom of Mercia, in 585. This tract of country, was the most considerable of the seven Saxon kingdoms; it contained all the midland counties of England.

In this surprising revolution, which rooted out one race of men, and planted another in the same soil, the only views of the invaders were to possess themselves of a fertile country, and to keep it without a rival. Providence employed those political views of men for the accomplishment of its own designs, the punishment of a degenerate and sinful nation. The Britons, by the abuse of divine grace, forfeited their inheritance; the Saxons, idolaters then, were the chosen people, destined by the supreme disposer of all things, to enter as it were into the promised land, and to form a new kingdom of faithful believers.



SECTION VII.

St. Austin, the Apostle of England.

(A. D. 596.) SCARCELY had the darkness of infidelity completely spread over that part of Britain's isle, which is properly called England, when Divine Providence sweetly disposed the means for dispelling it by the rays of truth. From Rome, as from the centre of the Christian religion, the faith of Christ diffused its light a second time over the idolatrous land of Britain. To the preaching of apostolical men, sent from Rome, the descendants of our English Sax-

ons, owe their knowledge of salvation, no less than the ancient Britons. Under God, the first visible mover of this religious work, was the holy Pope Gregory, justly called by Bede the Apostle of England.

Gregory, who held the See of Rome from the year 590 to 604, was the son of Gordianus, a rich Roman sanator. Being endowed with talents, and a happy propensity for learning, he diligently applied himself betimes to the study of grammar, of eloquence, and philosophy, to which accomplishments he added afterwards an eminent knowledge of the civil and canon law. His ample patrimony he dedicated either to charitable or religious uses, not to the empty purposes of pomp and vanity. Besides six monasteries, which he erected and endowed in Sicily, out of his estates there, he founded one in Rome, in honor of St. Andrew, in which he took the monastic habit, in the year 575, being thirty-five years old. Pope Benedict took him out of his retreat to employ him as his nuncio at the court of Constantinople. Pelagius II., his successor, called Gregory to Rome, and made him his secretary, permitting him at the same time to retain the government of his favorite monastery of St. Andrew, of which he had been chosen abbot. Upon the death of Pelagius, the unanimous voice of the clergy, of the senate, and people, placed him, against his will, in the chair of St. Peter. The eminent services which St. Gregory has rendered to the church, by his prudence, by his sanctity, by his miracles, by his writings, and pastoral achievements, have acquired him the surname of Great. With St. Ambrose, St. Austin, and St. Jerom, he is counted one of the four principal Doctors of the Church.

Such was the prelate, to whom this island stands indebted for her second conversion from heathenism to Christianity.

This happy event took its rise from the following circumstance. Gregory, before his ecclesiastical preferments, passing one day through the slave market at Rome, observed some comely youths there exposed for sale. Struck at their fair features, he enquired from what country and of what religion they were. Being told they were Angles and idolaters, he immediately resolved to use his best endeavors for the conversion of their countrymen in England. He obtained Pope Benedict's leave to go and preach the gospel to them. The Romans would not part with him. The Pope thought it prudent to recall his mission, and the affair lay dormant till Gregory's advancement to the pontificate. The nature of that exalted station precluded the zealous Pontiff from executing his former intention in person; he looked round for others to supply his place. In his monastery of St. Andrew, he had his choice of subjects, every way qualified for the important mission. He selected a certain number, of whom Austin the prior was the most conspicuous.

The missionaries, with St. Austin at their head, having received letters of recommendation to several bishops in France, set off upon their apostolical expedition. In France they received so frightful a description of the manners, language and ferocity of the people they were going to, that their courage failed, and Austin was deputed to solicit the Pope's leave for them to go back to Rome. The discerning Gregory, considering their fears as a temptation suggested by the infernal enemy of mankind, encouraged and persuaded them to proceed in their meritorious enterprise, where they had either the crown of martyrdom to receive, or a nation to convert to Christ. At the return of Austin, they engaged some Frenchmen, who spoke the Saxon language,

to accompany them as interpreters ; pursued their journey with fresh zeal to the sea-coast, where they embarked, and after a quick passage landed in the isle of Thanet, in the year 596. From thence St. Austin despatched a messenger to Ethelbert, the powerful king of Kent, to inform him that he and his companions had undertaken a long and perilous journey from Rome, and had landed in his territory with no other view than to teach him and his subjects the way to everlasting happiness.

Ethelbert was the fourth in descent from Hengist, a wise prince, and not an entire stranger to the Christian religion ; for he was married to a Catholic princess, Berta, the daughter of Charibert, king of Paris. Queen Berta, by agreement, had the free exercise of her religion, with liberty to educate her children in the same principles. Near Canterbury, the capital of the Kentish kingdom, stood an ancient church of St. Martin, once belonging to the Britons, now fallen to decay : the queen had it repaired and ornamented in a manner suitable to her devotion. There she used to pray, and there Luidhard, a French bishop, her director and almoner, performed the divine office.

Pleased with the missionaries' message, Ethelbert went over to the island of Thanet, and gave them a public audience upon the naked beach. The missionaries, drawn up in order, respectfully advanced towards him in procession, carrying for their banner a silver cross, with the image of our Saviour, and singing the Litany. As they approached the king, St. Austin bowed, and modestly addressed him in a speech, explanatory of the Christian doctrine, at some length. The king listened with attention, seemed to relish the interesting truths he had heard, and promised to reflect upon them at his leisure. He invited them to come over to the royal city, appointed them a convenient residence, with provisions for their table, and granted them free

permission to preach to his subjects the same comfortable doctrines which they had imparted to him. The humble missionaries gave hearty thanks to God for these prosperous beginnings, and received them as undoubted marks of his special protection over their undertaking. They made full use of the royal license, as zeal and prudence directed, to preach the Gospel, and establish the worship of the one true God amongst a Pagan people. Their apostolical manner of living, their abstemiousness, their modesty, their retiredness, their disengagement from all worldly enjoyments, was a strong recommendation for the doctrines they preached. The church of St. Martin, which was assigned for the queen's use, afforded them the advantage of exercising their sacerdotal functions in a public and solemn manner. There they assembled, there they prayed, there they sung the praises of God, there they said Mass, there they preached and baptised. The heathens saw and admired, they heard and believed. The multitude of converts was great. Before the end of twelve months the king himself received baptism, and a royal grant was published for the repair and building of churches through all his dominions.

Not to forget the writers of the sixth century, at the head of whom appears St. Gregory the Great, we must mention St. Cæsarius, archbishop of Arles; Evagrius the Syrian, an ecclesiastical historian; St. Fulgentius, an African bishop; St. Gregory, of Tours, who in ten books has written the history of the Franks; St. John Climacus; Boetius. In the first ages of the church, it appears that the episcopal elections were made by the con-provincial bishops, the clergy and the people, though not with the same right, nor in the same manner: the chief right was vested in the bishops. The confirmation of the bishop elect was made by the metropolitan. When the rulers of the state became Christians, they bore great sway in these elections.

CENTURY VII.

SECTION 1.

St. Austin's conference with British Bishops.

(A. D. 604.) IMMEDIATELY after king Ethelbert's conversion, Austin, as it seems, went over to France to confer with Virgilius, the archbishop of Arles and apostolical legate, from whose hands he then received the episcopal consecration. His stay at Arles was not long. At his return to England he found the harvest of souls to be very great, and the laborers few. He despatched two of his companions, Peter and Lawrence, to Rome, for a new supply. The Pope sent him a chosen band of religious men, amongst whom were Mellitus, Justus, and Paulinus. He sent with them "all things in general for the divine worship and the service of the church, viz: sacred vessels, ornaments for the altar, vestments for the priests, relics of the holy apostles and martyrs, and many books," as Bede informs us. Two years after, that is in the year 600, he sent over many other noble presents, with the archiepiscopal pall to St. Austin, empowering him to ordain twelve suffragan bishops, subject to his metropolitan see; he moreover authorised him to ordain a bishop of York, who should likewise be a metropolitan, with twelve suffragan bishops under him, when the northern English had embraced the faith.

While the Holy Pope Gregory was thus providing for the new English Church, he forgot not the ancient British, With deep concern he had learned how shamefully the Britons of his time had degenerated from the piety of their

forefathers, and into what strange customs of ecclesiastical discipline they had fallen. For, by the testimony of St. Gildas, they were sunk into the lowest degree of ignorance and barbarism, so as to retain little more than the name of Christians. Shut up within the recesses of barren mountains, they were left to themselves, without help, without advice, or information from the rest of mankind. St. Gregory, like a good shepherd, cast an eye of compassion on that distressed part of his flock, and, in his instructions to St. Austin, directed him not only to preach the word of life to the English, but also to procure, by persuasive means, if he could, a reformation of discipline and morals among the Britons. In compliance with these directions, the apostolic man, under the protection of king Ethelbert, made an excursion through the country, as far as the borders of Wales, from whence he let the British prelates know the motives of his coming thither, and signified his wish of conferring with them upon a subject in which the interest of religion was deeply concerned.

The Apostle of England, says Camden, and the British bishops, met at a place upon the skirts of Worcestershire, which was called, in Bede's time, Austin's Oak; the precise spot is not known. Austin began by brotherly admonitions, says venerable Bede, to remind them of two material points in which they differed from the practice of the universal Church, first in the time of keeping Easter, and secondly in the manner of administering the sacrament of baptism. By exhortations and entreaties he tried to prevail upon them to correct those two errors, and then to unite their endeavors with his for the conversion of the English. Their violent animosity against the English would not suffer them to undertake the least offices of charity in their regard: and a tenacious attachment to their own customs would admit

no change. St. Austin, seeing that neither exhortation nor argument had any weight with them, appealed by a kind of divine impulse, as St. Germanus had done in a former dispute with the British Pelagians, to the miraculous powers. "Let some infirm person," said he, "be brought in, and let their tradition be followed as acceptable to God, by whose prayer he shall be healed." The condition was accepted, though very unwillingly, by the Britons. A blind man of English race was brought forward, and presented to the British priests, but received no benefit from their prayers or other endeavors. Then Austin bent his knees to God and prayed, that by restoring corporal sight to this blind man, he would make his spiritual light shine on the souls of many. The blind man that instant saw; the Britons witnessed the miracle, acknowledged Austin's doctrine to be true, but said they could not depart from their traditionary customs without their nation's consent. They desired that a more general synod might be held on a fixed day, and the matter be more fully debated. St. Austin consented.

In the country, not far distant from the place of rendezvous, lived a hermit much respected for holiness and reputed wisdom. To this hermit, on the day before the meeting, certain persons were deputed for advice how to act, whether to adopt Austin's doctrine or to retain their own. The hermit answered, If he be a man of God, hear and follow him. But how are we to know that? said the deputies. By his meek and humble behavior, replied the hermit. You must so contrive it, that he and his company come first to the place of conference; he will probably sit down to rest himself after his walk; if, at your approach, he shall rise up, look upon him to be an humble man, a faithful servant of God; hear and obey him; but if he shall not rise, turn away and despise him.

The place appointed for their meeting was the same as before, near the oak, in an open field, under the wide canopy of Heaven. The English archbishop arrived first, as the Britons had contrived; he sat himself down and waited their arrival. Abbot Dinooth, with his most knowing brethren of Bangor, and seven bishops, as their annals say, some time after came in view. As they approached, but still at some distance, they descried Austin sitting on his seat. He rose not at the moment. This they deemed a sufficient pretext not to enter upon the conference, as the wise hermit advised. No sooner did they come within hearing, than they began in rude language to vent their spleen against the inoffensive prelate, and to charge him with pride and arrogance for not rising at the moment he saw them coming. In vain did Austin strive by smooth discourse to pacify and talk them into temper. He meekly repeated what he had already told them, that he required nothing more than what the uniform practice of the church and common charity required from every Christian. He spoke to no purpose; no conciliatory proposal was attended to; they answered by abuse, and abruptly turned away with sullen looks of anger and disgust.

This, in substance, is venerable Bede's account of the famous conference, that passed between the Apostle of England and the British clergy. It is the only authentic account we have, and can have, of the questions that were proposed and submitted to their consideration. Of the independency of the British Church, and of the Pope's supremacy, no mention was made. Whether the British bishops at that time disclaimed all foreign supremacy, as is asserted in a Welch manuscript printed by Spelman, affects not the subject of the conference. That manuscript is evidently a piece of forgery, not so old as the reformation, as is proved

by Mr. Turberville,* and Doctor Hawarden.† Bede's unquestionable authority in this matter will guide the young reader in the judgment he has to form of those unsupported assertions, and virulent invectives, which he may meet with in the writings of an archbishop Parker, a bishop Godwin, a Holinshed, a John Fox, a John Gale, a Rapin, or the Lutheran penmen of Magdeburg. With great candor, and with truth, Mr. Collier writes of St. Austin, that "he was engaged in a glorious undertaking, and was blessed with wonderful success; that he converted the kingdom of Kent by the strength of his own conduct and miracles; that he lived suitably to the business of a missionary, and practiced great austerities. Let his memory therefore be mentioned with honor, and let us praise Almighty God for making him so powerful an instrument in the happiness of this island."

Bede has not mentioned the year in which St. Austin died, and, on account of that omission, authors are divided in their conjectures about the time of his death; some place it in 603, others in 615. From historical facts, it appears that he must have died in 608. His remains were interred in the northern porch of Saints Peter and Paul's church in Canterbury. Matthew Parker and Francis Godwin have expressed much rancor against this Apostle of England, and even assert him to have been the author and instigator of that barbarous massacre, in which twelve hundred monks of Bangor were butchered by Ethelfrid, the Pagan king of Northumberland, with whom the saint never had any communication.

To establish a charge of so atrocious a nature against an apostolic prelate in so universal a repute for holiness of life, as St. Austin was, clear and incontestable proofs should be

* *Manual of Controversies.*

† *Preface to the Church of Christ.*

adduced: it should be proved that Austin was not only alive, but that he actually instigated and caused the bloody deed. This has not and cannot be done. The slaughter of the Monks of Bangor happened in the year 613, as the learned archbishop Usher writes from the best historical records to be met with, five years after St. Austin's death. Venerable Bede says in general terms, that the slaughter happened a considerable time after his translation to the heavenly kingdom. The authority of Bede carries with it too much weight not to be respected even by bishop Godwin. What then does his lordship do to get rid of an authority, which he dares not contradict? He boldly asserts, that Bede never wrote any such words. Without aiming at any proof, he ventures, on his own authority, to pronounce it "to be as clear as the light at noon-day, that the clause we now read in Bede, * has been, since his time, inserted in the context." What pity is it, that subsequent writers should insult the credulity of their readers, by copying so barefaced a calumny into their publications.

SECTION II.

Conversion of England.

(A. D. 625.) ST. AUSTIN, not long before his death, ordained Lawrence, one of his first companions on the mission, to be his successor in the See of Canterbury, lest that infant church should for a moment be left without a pastor. The good king Ethelbert gave every encouragement to his subjects to become Christians, but constrained no one. On

* Quamvis ipso jam multo ante tempore ad ecclesia regna subita.

bearing the sublimity, the holiness, and rewards of a revealed religion clearly explained to them, numbers eagerly embraced it; no less than ten thousand were baptised in one day. The Saxon idols were then pulled down, their temples changed into Christian churches, and in the course of a few years a whole kingdom of fierce and licentious heathens became humble, meek, and devout Christians. From Kent the faith spread among the East Saxons, by the preaching of Mellitus, whom St. Austin had ordained bishop of London. After these, the East Angles in part received the faith; for they were not entirely converted, till their pious king, Sigebert, introduced amongst them St. Felix, a Burgundian, who was consecrated their first bishop, and deputed by St. Honorius, the fifth archbishop of Canterbury, to preach the Gospel to them. Anno 636.

In the year 616, died the holy king Ethelbert, after a reign of fifty-six years, the last twenty of which he was a Christian. His name is commemorated in the Roman martyrology on the twenty-fourth of February. His son, Edbald, succeeded him on the throne. He left a virtuous daughter, Edelburga by name, whom Edwin, king of the Northumbrians, demanded in marriage. The princess answered, that she could not in conscience consent to marry a Pagan. Edwin assured her and her brother Edbald, that she should have every protection and indulgence with respect to religion, and if, upon examination, he should find it a good one, that he himself would embrace it. Upon these conditions the marriage was concluded in 625. Paulinus, on that occasion, was consecrated bishop of York, by St. Justus, the metropolitan of Canterbury, and accompanied the princess to the north. St. Paulinus was one of the auxiliary missionaries, sent from Rome to St. Austin, and till then had been employed in the kingdom of Kent. By this prelate's

zeal, Edwin, with many of his subjects, was converted to the faith of Christ. Edwin's heroic virtues have enrolled his name among the saints. He was slain in battle, in 633, and St. Paulinus retired upon that event to Rochester, which See he governed till his death, in 644. In the mean time, Oswald, the nephew of king Edwin, returned from Scotland, where he had spent his youth from the year 616, and asserted his right to the crown of the Northumbrians. He defeated his enemies in the field, and ascended the throne in 635. The first concern of this pious king, who had been instructed in the Christian faith among the Scots, was to make his subjects partakers of the same grace. St. Paulinus was gone, nor would Edbald, king of Kent, permit him to return. Oswald then addressed himself to the abbot of the great monastery of St. Columbia, in the isle of Hy, that he would procure him some apostolical man to preach the gospel to his Northumbrians. Aidanus,* a pious monk of that monastery, was selected for that Evangelical undertaking, and being consecrated bishop, fixed his episcopal see at Lindisfarne. In the compass of a few years, this holy bishop and his fellow-laborers converted the whole kingdom of the Northumbrians to Christ. But while he taught them the principles of divine faith, he implicated them in an error concerning the time of keeping Easter. This was no error in faith; it was wholly founded in misapprehension and ignorance: it broke not the tie of Catholic communion; for, as Bede remarks, it differed from that Asiatic error of the Jews and Quartodecimans, which is proscribed by the Council of Nice. St. Aidanus died in 651.

About the same time, died also St. Birinus, the apostle of the West Saxons. This zealous man was a priest of Rome,

* A native of Ireland, as were most of his fellow-laborers then on the mission in Great Britain.

and being desirous of bringing the idolatrous English to the knowledge of the true God, solicited Pope Honorius for leave to announce the gospel to them. He obtained his request, received episcopal ordination, landed in England, and fixed his see at Dorchester, upon the Thames, in Oxfordshire. King Cynegils, who seems to have been already prepossessed in favor of Christianity, gave him a gracious reception, willingly listened to his instructions, was convinced and baptised by him. The people, in crowds, followed his example.

In 653, commenced the conversion of the kingdom of Mercia on the following occasion. Penda, the younger, who reigned in Mercia, wished to contract an alliance with king Oswi, the pious brother and successor of Oswald. With a splendid retinue he set off for the Northumbrian court, and demanded Alcfreda, the king's daughter, in marriage. Oswi answered that he must become a Christian to gain her. To this Penda readily consented, being already convinced of the absurdity of Paganism. He and his attendants entered upon a regular course of instructions under Finian,* the bishop of Lindisfarne, whom the Scottish bishops had ordained to succeed St. Aidanus. The young prince, having received baptism with all his attendants, took with him, in his return, four priests, who, with successful zeal, labored in the conversion of the middle Saxons. The names of these priests were Cedda, and Adda, and Beth, and Diuma; the first three were English, the last was a Scotchman.

Thus, in about fifty years after St. Austin's first landing in the isle of Thanet, six kingdoms of the heptarchy came to the knowledge of Christianity. It was not till near

* Another Irishman on the Apostolic mission in Great Britain.

twenty years after, that the South Saxons received that grace by the preaching of St. Wilfrid, the archbishop of York, an enlightened guide of the infant English church.

SECTION III.

Exaltation of the Cross.

(A. D. 629.) WHILE religion was recovering itself in the west, it experienced many severe checks in the east, partly from heresy, and partly from the insults of infidelity. Justin the younger, whose incapacity and immoralities had disgraced the imperial purple for twelve years, was succeeded by Tiberius, a religious prince, who, after a reign of four years, left the crown to Mauritius, his son-in-law, anno 582. Mauritius, by pedigree a Roman, but a Cappadocian by birth, reigned twenty years, and might have passed for an accomplished prince, had not a sordid avarice tarnished the lustre of his many good qualities. These had acquired him a splendid reputation; his avarice lost him the affection of his subjects, and brought him to a tragical end. The exasperated army declared him unworthy of the crown, and, in an act of mutiny, proclaimed Phocas, a centurion in the troops, emperor in his stead. Phocas marched, without loss of time, to Constantinople, where a strong faction stood ready to receive him. Mauritius, being shamefully betrayed and abandoned by his ministers, fled with his five sons for safety to Chalcedon. Phocas sent assassins after him, with orders to massacre the children before their father's face, and after that to massacre the father himself. The barbarous order was strictly executed. The degraded emperor humbly

submitted to the divine will, and bore the cruel stroke with a fortitude becoming a Christian prince. His prayer to God had ever been, that the punishment of his transgressions might be inflicted on him in this life, rather than in the next. In his bleeding heart he felt the deadly wound, which each child received, and with a penitential sigh exclaimed, in the words of David, "Thou art just, O Lord, and righteous are thy judgments."

Mauritius, and his guiltless offspring, being thus inhumanly cut off, Phocas, an obscure subaltern in the army, a mere sink of lust and intemperance, without so much as a single virtue to recommend him, mounted the throne of Constantinople, and was peaceably acknowledged for emperor, both in the eastern and western provinces of the empire.

Chosroes, the political monarch of Persia, with seeming sentiments of anger at the murder of his former friend and ally, loudly exclaimed against the dignified assassin, and denounced revenge. Chosroes, in his distress, had solicited and obtained succors from Mauritius, which had secured to him the crown of Persia. Under the specious pretext of gratitude towards an injured benefactor, but in fact with a determined resolution to follow the impulse of ambition, he declared war against the murderer Phocas. With a well provided army he passed the Roman boundary, and, meeting with no resistance, quickly over ran Mesopotamia and Syria. Phocas, who had renounced the profession of a soldier, without assuming the office or character of a prince, remained inactive, and with indifference beheld the ravages of his rich provinces. Chosroes was left to indulge his revenge or ambition without a check. The statesmen and senators of Constantinople, seeing nothing done for the preservation of the empire, secretly requested Heraclius, the governor of Africa, to come to their assistance, assuring

him that the purple should be the reward of his services. Age had extinguished the last spark of ambition in the breast of Heraclius. But to his youthful son, the prospect of a crown appeared too flattering to be rejected. Without a moment's hesitation, the young Heraclius boldly embarked in the hazardous undertaking, put a select body of troops on board the ships that were ready for sea, set sail, and cast anchor in the harbor of Constantinople, before Phocas had the least suspicion of a rival being near. From his palace window the trembling Phocas saw the man that was come to snatch the crown from his head. Sensible of his danger, and destitute of friends, he ran from one apartment to another, till he was seized by a private enemy, and conveyed on board the galley of Heraclius. Heraclius first reproached him for his execrable crimes, then ordered his head to be struck off, and his body to be burned. Such was the vengeance that overtook Phocas, after a wicked and inglorious reign of eight years. Heraclius was immediately proclaimed emperor, and crowned by Sergius, the young patriarch of Constantinople. Anno 610.

The death of Phocas made no alteration in the politics of Chosroes. His subsequent conduct showed that no principle of justice, of gratitude, or honor, but restless ambition and an implacable hatred against the Christian and Roman name, had urged him to the war. Unprepared and unable to cope with so powerful a rival in the field, Heraclius sued for peace even on the humiliating terms of purchasing it by an annual tribute. The haughty Persian rejected the proposal with scorn. In four successful campaigns he subdued Syria, Cappadocia, and Palestine. The plundered cities of Antioch, Cæsarea, Damascus, and Jerusalem yielded an immense booty to the greedy conquerors. Jerusalem was taken by assault, and every outrage was committed on the citizens

and buildings, that the insolence of victory could dictate to the enemies of Christianity. Ninety thousand Christians were sold to the Jews, the holy sepulchre of our Lord, the stately churches of Constantine and Helen, were stripped of their costly ornaments and burned; all the rich moveables, sacred vessels, and precious relics, amongst which was a part of the holy cross, were rapaciously collected and transported into Persia with the patriarch Zachary. This passed in the year 614. In pursuit of new victories, the Persian army then marched into Egypt, took the wealthy city of Alexandria, subdued and ravaged the whole country as far as Lybia and the confines of Ethiopia, while another army penetrated through Pontus, Cappadocia, Galatia, Asia Minor, and Bithynia, to the straits of Constantinople.

Twelve years had now elapsed since Heraclius mounted the throne, during all which time he remained either an idle spectator of the war, or an abject supplicant for peace. All his best provinces were in the hands of his enemy; the strength of his empire was reduced to the walls of Constantinople, to a remnant of Greece, of Africa, and Italy, and some maritime towns on the Asiatic coast. In that desperate posture of affairs, an insulting message from Chosroes, at length roused the desponding monarch into action: Go, said the haughty Persian to the Greek ambassadors, go, tell your master that no offers he can make will be listened to till he abjures a crucified God, and embraces the worship of the sun. Heraclius, notwithstanding his losses by land, was still master at sea; he had a fleet, which enabled him to attack the enemy in his most vulnerable part; he took the wise and noble resolution of carrying the war into Persia. He embarked with a small but choice number of troops, steered through the Archipelago, and landed, without

opposition, upon the confines of Cilicia and Syria, in the bay of Scanderoon. He marched more like a hasty traveller than an encumbered warrior through the country, subdued the whole to his obedience, in one campaign, and placed his troops in winter quarters, within reach of the Euxine sea, for the greater convenience of pushing on his expedition next spring. He took the opportunity of returning to Constantinople, where the approach of the enemy and the despondency of the city, rendered his presence very necessary. He succeeded in repelling all present danger from the capital, which left him at liberty to pursue his Persian expedition. Taking with him new recruits, he sailed through the Euxine sea, and landed at Trebizond. From thence he joined his army, in winter quarters, marched out through the mountainous country of Armenia, and entered Persia.

Chosroes, who had lately denounced destruction to the Roman empire, was now forced to defend his own. Finding the Christian army to advance with rapid and victorious strides towards his capital, he was under the necessity of abandoning his foreign conquests, and of leading back his whole force to stop the progress of his enemy. The scale of fortune was now turned. In five prosperous campaigns the Christians, under the banner of the cross, often engaged the infidels, and as often conquered. Yet, in the midst of conquest, Heraclius earnestly wished for peace, and generously offered it on terms the most liberal. But the lofty pride of Chosroes had not yet sunk to the level of his disgrace. The sixth and last year of the war in Persia was closed by a decisive battle on the banks of the Tigris, where Ninive once stood. With little loss, the Greeks obtained a complete victory. Chosroes had neither the resolution nor the means of retrieving this fatal overthrow.

Tired of his tyrannic government, his nobles and disaffected generals conspired against him. They murdered him. Siroes, his eldest son, whom he had intended to supersede in the succession of the crown, ascended the Persian throne. A suspension of arms was immediately agreed on, terms of peace were proposed and settled between the two emperors. Siroes, on his part, released all the Christian prisoners, renounced his father's conquests, and restored the holy cross, which, with other sacred spoils, had been carried from Jerusalem into Persia fourteen years before.

Heraclius returned to Constantinople in splendid triumph, amidst the shouts of his rescued capital. He entered the city in a chariot drawn by four elephants. The following year, 629, Jerusalem saw the triumphal honors renewed in a more modest and more religious manner. With pious gratitude to God for the victories he had won, Heraclius went in pilgrimage to return thanks upon the very spot, where the mystery of our redemption had been wrought on the same sanctified wood, which he had recovered from Pagan hands. Divested of his imperial ornaments, bare-foot, and in the garb of an humble penitent, Heraclius took the precious relic on his shoulder, and, advancing, in slow procession, with the patriarch Zachary by his side, devoutly carried it from the place whence the infidels had taken it. The silver case in which it was locked and sealed with the bishop's seal, had never been opened nor even broken by the Persians. The patriarch opened the case, identified the precious relic, and exposed it to the longing eyes of the faithful. This recovery, or as it is called, this Exaltation of the Cross, is annually commemorated by the Church on the fourteenth of September.

SECTION IV.

Desolation of the Oriental Churches.

(A. D. 640.) Not many years had the Christians of the east been delivered from the Persian yoke, when they fell under that of the Mahometan Arabs. These Arabs, the enthusiastic warriors of the desert, had ranged themselves under the standard of Mahomet, the founder of their empire and religion. Mahomet, a false prophet, and notorious imposter, was born in the year 568, at Mecca, a considerable town of stony Arabia, near the Red Sea. His mother was a Jewess; his father a Pagan, of noble birth, but not rich; derived his pedigree from Ismael, the son of Abraham and Agar. Being left an orphan, when only two years old, he was taken by an uncle, and trained up to traffic, the only lucrative employment in a country where barren sands afford little encouragement to the husbandman. No pains were taken for the improvement of his mind; he was not taught so much as to read or write; he drove his uncle's camels till the twenty-fifth year of his age; he then found it necessary to look out for service. For, notwithstanding his high pedigree, the fortune he inherited from his father was too scanty to maintain him. He undertook to be factor for a rich widow of Mecca. Though unacquainted with letters, Mahomet had strong natural talents, and possessed some personal qualifications. His figure was comely, his language correct, his manner pleasing. These advantages quickly drew the notice and gained the good graces of his fond employer. She made him a tender of her hand and fortune. This matrimonial connection gave him not only wealth, but leisure to prepare a new system of religion,

which an enthusiastic genius suggested to his wild imagination. He built his system on this compound basis of truth and falsehood, That there is one only God, and that Mahomet is the apostle of God.

In the year 608, which was the fortieth of his age, Mahomet publicly assumed the title and character of a prophet. In the crowded streets, and before the temple of Mecca, he declared himself to be inspired and commissioned by the most high God to exterminate the Pagan, the Jewish, and the Christian forms of worship, and, by force of arms, to propagate the knowledge and true religion of one only God over all the earth. His declaration was followed by serious endeavors to gain proselytes. The magistrates of Mecca began to be alarmed; apprehensive of tumults, they wisely resolved to prevent the mischief by securing the fanatic. Mahomet had his spies, who gave him timely notice of his danger; he fled off by night, and retired to Medina, a trading town upon the same coast, two hundred and twenty miles distant from Mecca. This flight of Mahomet, in the year 622, has fixed the memorable æra of the Hegira, from which the Mahometan nations date the beginning of their lunar years to this day.

At Medina, the fugitive imposter was received with princely honors, and every encouragement given for the propagation of his religious system. There he erected a Mosque, or a Meeting-house, where he preached and prayed. His discourses were a rhapsody of doctrinal precepts, which, at first, were loosely penned down by his hearers, and afterwards collected into order in a book, called the Coran or Alcoran. He soon perceived that abstract notions of good and evil made no impression on an ignorant and carnal people, such as the Arabs were. To gain them over to his system, he found it necessary to humor their passions,

and to flatter them with the promise of a delicious paradise, where their appetites would be gratified with every sensual enjoyment. A plurality of wives made a principal ingredient in the base medly of his indulgent doctrines. The Arabs were likewise fond of plunder, in which they did not choose to be restrained. Mahomet was liberal in his principles, when it suited his purpose. To the assumed character of an apostle, he added that of a public robber. He put himself at the head of an armed banditti, attacked the rich caravans of the merchants, and devoutly shared the spoil with his fanatic followers. This lucrative trade procured him many proselytes. Their numbers soon swelled into a formidable army. His insolence and presumption swelled in proportion. He assumed the triple title of king, legislator, and apostle of the faithful; he considered the rest of mankind as infidels, and declared war against them all. The promise of booty to his comrades, if they survived the battle, and the assurance of a place in his sensual paradise, if they fell, made heroes of men naturally indolent and timid. His first military enterprise was against Mecca, on the reduction of which all Arabia submitted to his arms and doctrine. He then meditated an expedition against Syria, when death, after a short illness, summoned him out of life in the year 632, the sixty-fourth of his age. He left no issue except one favorite daughter, called Fatima, who was married to Ali, the founder of the Mahometan sect in Persia.

Abubeker, a citizen of Mecca, had been Mahomet's first follower. The Musulmans chose him for their chief. He took the title of Caliph, which is to say Vicar, meaning to style himself the vicar of the prophet. He reigned but two years, and had for successor Omar, who, to the title of Caliph, joined that of Emir, i. e. Commander of the faithful.

These titles descended to his successors in command. In the short period of a ten years' reign, this warlike chieftain not only snatched Syria, Palestine and Egypt from the Roman empire, but with rapidity of success beyond example, subdued the vast empire of Persia, overturned the idolatrous temples of the sun, dictated new laws, and a new religion to the sages of Media, and placed a new race of monarchs, with the trophies of the Alcoran, upon the throne of Artaxerxes.

Heraclius, who had fought and conquered so gallantly in the plains of Persia, relapsed after his triumph into his former habit of inactive indolence. Unwilling to expose himself in battle against the enthusiastic Arabs, or Saracens, as they are likewise called, he suffered them to take one town after another, till they were masters of all Syria. Then seeing that the loss of Palestine must soon follow, he gave orders for the holy cross to be conveyed to Constantinople, and abandoned every thing else to the chance of war. Jerusalem, in its turn, was besieged by Omar, and taken by capitulation in the year 637. The Saracens, after that, carried the war into Egypt, where they met with little resistance, except from the city of Alexandria, which stood a siege of fourteen months. It surrendered at last on the 22d of December, 640, and has groaned under the Mahometan yoke ever since. Its famous library was destroyed by an express order of the Caliph. The number of volumes was such, that they sufficed to light the fires of four thousand public baths for six months.

From this memorable epoch, the state of Catholicity in the oriental provinces, became most wretched. Heavy tribute and slavish disgrace was the portion of all who refused to receive the Alcoran. Many of the churches were without bishops and other ministers of the altar, or if

any remained, few were sound in doctrine. For besides the Monothelites, who had lately sprung up, the heretics of older date, such as the Nestorians in Syria, the Jacobites or Eutychians in Egypt, being no longer awed by the civil power of a Christian sovereign, openly avowed their erroneous principles. By the intrusion of false pastors into the patriarchal Sees of Alexandria, of Antioch, and Jerusalem, the succession of Catholic bishops is broken in those oppressed churches, nor from that time downwards can it be clearly ascertained. The episcopal succession of Rome alone stands in the midst of all civil revolutions unshaken and uninterrupted from the days of St. Peter.



SECTION V.

Celebration of Easter.

(A. D. 655.) FROM the melancholy prospect of the eastern regions, we turn our eyes again to England. The error of the Britons in keeping Easter on a wrong day was communicated to the northern English by the bishop Aidanus, as we have noticed above. That error originated, as it seems, with the Scotch or Irish, from whom the Britons took it about thirty years before St. Austin came to England; for we cannot trace it higher. In the year 566, Columba, a religious priest and abbot, as Bede calls him, quitted Ireland, and fixed his residence in the isle of Hy or Iona, on the western coast of Scotland. There he built a monastery, the fertile seminary of many monks. Though eminently skilled in the nature and practice of Christian virtues, he grossly erred in a material point of ecclesiastical

discipline. He celebrated the great festival of Easter on a day different from that which was appointed and observed by the universal Church. Whether Columba first began, or only followed the erroneous practice, as he found it, history does not tell us. That the error sprung from misconception, and not from malice, we have every reason to suppose; that the neighboring Britons fell into it, is a fact beyond dispute. But to say that the Britons originally received the practice, together with their faith, from the East, is a wild assertion, too destitute of proof, and even of probability, to be seriously adopted by any writer, who respects his readers or himself.

Our blessed Redeemer having been pleased to rise from the dead on the first day of the week, namely Sunday, the Church ordained that the annual commemoration of that joyful mystery should be made upon a Sunday. But it not being possible that a Sunday should fall upon the same day of the month two years following, Easter-day necessarily became a moveable feast, and required some general rule to fix its uniform observance on the same day throughout Christendom. The Church, ever attentive to the divine service, has made that rule, which fixes the observance of Easter-day upon the first Sunday subsequent to the first full moon after the vernal equinox. For the direction and information of the distant churches in this matter, annual letters of notification were regularly sent from the Roman See. These were termed Paschal letters, and as long as the intercourse between Rome and Britain remained open, were duly sent to the British bishops, and by them to the bishops of Ireland. But when the Saxon invasion had cut off all communication with Rome, then the Paschal error crept into the island. The error was precisely this, that it placed Easter-day on the first Sunday after the full moon nearest

to the vernal equinox, either before or after it, beginning to count from the fourteenth day of the month, instead of the twenty-first, by which means Easter-day was frequently anticipated before the canonical term.

It has been mentioned in a foregoing paragraph, that the Northumbrians became acquainted with the Christian faith in consequence of their king Edwin's marriage with the princess Edelburga, of Kent. After Edwin's death they relapsed into idolatry, and forced the bishop Paulinus to quit York, with the queen dowager and her two sons. Prince Oswald likewise had been obliged to fly from the scene of civil war. He sought and found an asylum among the Scots. After a lapse of some years, he returned and possessed himself of his hereditary crown of Northumberland. Finding Paulinus gone, and the country without a bishop, he procured St. Aidan, a monk of Columba's monastery, to be consecrated bishop, who settled at Lindisfarne. Finian and Coleman, Scottish monks from the same house, succeeded him in his episcopal dignity and jurisdiction, which comprised the whole kingdom of Northumberland. By these prelates the erroneous system of keeping Easter was introduced among the English Saxons. But the system was not universally embraced even among the Northumbrians. Some, better instructed, followed the canonical rule; thus the faithful were divided both in practice and opinion, while some kept Easter at one time, and some at another. To put an end to this division, king Oswi, who had succeeded his brother Oswald, summoned the two parties to meet him at the monastery of Streaneshalch, now Whitby, and there discuss the point in question. They met on the appointed day, in 655; bishop Coleman, with his Scottish clergy, appeared on one side, and on the other, Agilbert, bishop of Dorchester, the abbot Wilfrid, afterwards bishop

of York, and some others. The king in a short speech having proposed the subject of debate, bishop Coleman rose, and in a modest manner stated the grounds of his opinion. Wilfrid, by bishop Agilbert's desire, then spoke, and in his answer produced such convincing arguments for the Roman practice, as admitted of no reply. Oswi, who came prepossessed in favor of the Scottish tradition, owned himself convinced of its being founded in error, and declared that he should in future faithfully follow the Roman discipline, which had been established by St. Peter's authority, and was now observed by the whole Catholic Church in every known part of the globe. Coleman seeing his opinion set at nought, retired with his adherents to the monastery of Hy. He seems to have submitted soon after to the force of truth, but his Scotch brethren stubbornly retained their opinion till the sixteenth year of the following century, when they yielded to the strong remonstrances of Egbert, a virtuous English priest, and renounced their error, about a hundred and fifty years after it had been first set up.

SECTION VI.

State of the English Church.

(A. D. 670.) Soon after the conference of Streaneshalch, Agilbert retired in disgust from the See of Dorchester, and returned to France, his native country. The cause of his disgust arose from the arbitrary division of his diocese, which Kenelwalch, king of Wessex, made in favor of Wina, an English Saxon bishop, lately ordained in France. What

induced the king to this act, was the strong desire he had of having a bishop he could converse with in his own language, which was the Saxon. Wina fixed his episcopal residence at Winchester, till he was expelled by the very king who had uncanonically introduced him.

Since the retreat of Paulinus, no one had been appointed to succeed him in the See of York. Such an appointment was now become a more desirable object, as the retreat of Coleman from Lindisfarne, and the death of Tuda, his successor, had left the northern kingdom without a bishop. This the young king Alefrid, the son of Oswi, and his associate on the throne, undertook to effect in the person of his chaplain, the learned and virtuous Wilfrid. For this purpose he sent him abroad to be ordained by Agilbert, his former friend, now bishop of Paris. Agilbert received him with singular marks of esteem, and solemnly performed the ceremony of his consecration at Compiègne, being assisted by eleven bishops. Wilfrid made a longer stay than was expected; king Oswi grew impatient; he resolved to provide his subjects with another pastor; he cast his eye upon Chad, the abbot of Lestringay, and brother to St. Cedda, the deceased bishop of London, and caused him to be consecrated by Wina of Winchester. Wilfrid returned soon after, and finding the See of York now occupied by Chad, silently retired to the abbey of Rippon, where he passed three years in the pious exercises of a monastic life.

During these irregular transactions in the English church, died Deus-dedit, the holy archbishop of Canterbury. Egbert, the religious king of Kent, wished to have an Englishman for his successor, rightly judging, that the advantage of being a native, and of speaking the Saxon language, would gain him favor in the nation, and enable him to do more good. But the English church was still in her infancy, her

schools had not been established long enough to furnish a supply of fit subjects for the sacred ministry; her clergy were not under due subordination, nor had she yet arrived to such a maturity as to stand in need of no foreign help. Her discipline was not yet formed, her new converts frequently relapsed into Paganism, her bishops, in fine, were not canonically appointed, as appears from the irregular introduction of Wina into Wessex, of Aidanus into Lindisfarne, and the ordination of Chad for the bishopric of York. The political jealousies and different interests, that reigned in the Heptarchy, were moreover great hindrances to the formation of a regular system of ecclesiastical government for the whole nation. To give strength and vigor to the rising church, such a system was absolutely necessary, and the complexion of the times seemed to favor its establishment. Its success greatly depended on the prelate, who should be appointed to the metropolitan See. Great abilities, great prudence, great steadiness, and great ecclesiastical knowledge were requisite to succeed in the attempt: those abilities king Egbert discovered in the person of Wighart, a priest of the church of Canterbury. The clergy and the people united with the king in voting for his promotion. Wighart set off for Rome, with letters of recommendation to the Pope Vitalianus. His holiness gave him a gracious reception, and confirmed his election; but unexpected death prevented his ordination.

How to replace him was then the difficulty. Egbert was very pressing to have an Englishman for primate, who should be able to preach to his subjects in a language they understood. But an Englishman, duly qualified for so important a station, on which so much at that time depended, was not easily found. There lived at Rome an Asiatic monk of unblemished morals and extensive learning.

Theodore by name, a native of Tarsus in Cilicia. He was closely connected in a habit of religious friendship with Adrian, a learned African abbot, who strongly recommended him to the Pope, as possessing every qualification requisite for the instruction and direction of a newly converted nation. Upon examination, the Pope found him such, and proposed him to king Egbert, who consented to receive him for Primate of England. The humble Theodore declined the honor and the charge, alledging his incapacity, his unworthiness, his advanced age, and ignorance of the English tongue. His objections were overruled; the Pope ordained him bishop for the metropolitan See of Canterbury, in 660; he immediately set off to take possession in the company of Benet Biscop, an English monk, and of Adrian, his friend, the learned abbot of Africa. King Egbert deputed one of his nobles to meet him at Paris, and to conduct him with honor into England.

Theodore came vested with a power from Vitalianus, which gave him a spiritual jurisdiction over all the bishops of England; and venerable Bede observes, that he was the first to whom the other bishops paid that submission. Five years had elapsed since the demise of his predecessor, during which time many abuses had crept in, which called for immediate redress. St. Wilfrid was unjustly kept out of the See of York, to which he had been canonically ordained; the simplicity of St. Chad had been abused for a wrong purpose. Theodore declared Chad's institution null, but in consideration of his profound humility and exemplary piety, made him bishop of Litchfield. He put St. Wilfrid into possession of his See; he ordained the holy bishops Erconwald, Cuthbert, and Lutherius, to fill up the vacant Sees of London, of Lindisfarne, and Wessex, and erected new bishoprics, as the good of religion seemed to require.

For the classical education of youth he founded public schools in different parts of the island, and for the direction of the clergy established, with his suffragans, a regular system of ecclesiastical discipline, which marked out to each one his precise office and rule of conduct. Hence, right order, peace and harmony universally flourished, to the great increase and ornament of religion. These, says venerable Bede, were the happiest times that Britain had seen since the Saxons landed on her shore. St. Theodore having presided over the English church with distinguished ability and success for one and twenty years, went to receive the reward of his labors in the year 690, of his age eighty-eight. After death he still survived, says archbishop Parker, in the many and excellent disciples, whom he left behind him. He was succeeded by St. Britwald.

SECTION VII.

Sixth General Council.

(A. D. 680.) THE succession of sovereign Pontiffs, from the death of St. Gregory, in 604, was carried on in the following order: Sabianus, Boniface III., St. Boniface IV., St. Deus-dedit, Boniface V., Honorius, Severinus, John IV., Theodore, St. Martin, St. Eugenius, St. Vitalianus, Adeodatus, Donus, St. Agatho.

About the year 633, a new heresy started up, in the person of Theodore, bishop of Pharan, in Arabia. It was called a new heresy, because it assumed a new name, but in fact it was nothing more than the old Eutychian heresy in a different shape. It asserted, as Eutyches had done, that

in Jesus Christ there was but one natural will and one operation, from whence it was called Monothelism. It was readily adopted by Sergius, the patriarch of Constantinople, and Cyrus, the patriarch of Alexandria, whose credit and authority made it current in the east. Sergius, an artful Syrian, born of Eutychian parents, employed all the cunning and duplicity he was master of to disseminate his favorite errors in a new dress, and under a different name. By dissimulation or by flattery, as most suitable to his purpose, he engaged many to adopt his system. In plausible and ambiguous language, he composed an ample exposition of religious doctrines, which he persuaded the vain Heraclius to adopt and publish as his own, under the title of an imperial Ecthesis.* To oppose the spreading evil, God provided his church with a faithful champion in St. Sophronius, the patriarch of Jerusalem. This venerable and watchful prelate observed the progress which this fashionable error of the day was making among the faithful, and exerted his zeal to stop it. For the instruction of his flock he published a pastoral letter, in which he detected the deadly poison, that lay concealed under a deceitful cover, and in the clearest manner explained the uniform and constant doctrine of the Catholic Church, in her belief of two distinct wills and operations, as well as in two distinct natures in Jesus Christ our Redeemer.

Sergius saw his system directly attacked and exposed in the letter of Sophronius. Apprehensive of the impression it might make upon the public mind, and suspecting that he himself might be brought into difficulties about it, he judged it prudent to take his precautions, and to secure the good opinion of Honorius, the Roman Pontiff. He wrote him a diffuse letter upon the subject, couched in the most flattering

* Or Exposition.

but ambiguous terms; to deceive and succeed the better, he affected to be candid. The present disputes about religion, said he, have raised a violent ferment in the east, have given scandal, and prevented many from returning to the bosom of the Church. He represented to his Holiness, that the difference of opinion was merely about words, and not about the substance of faith; that certain new terms had imprudently been introduced, which gave offence; that for the sake of peace he wished to have those terms suppressed, but being desirous of acting in concert with his Holiness, he humbly begged that neither party should be allowed to speak either of one or two wills in Christ. St. Sophronius, on the other hand, deputed one of his suffragans to Rome, with instructions to unfold the secret machinations that were in agitation against the Catholic faith. The Monothelites upon this grew loud and boisterous, cried out with vehemence against the calumny, and declared themselves innocent of the charge. Honorius lent his ear to the sounding periods of Sergius, and by an error in judgment adopted the treacherous measure he proposed of imposing silence upon the two parties. This temporising conduct in Honorius gave no small uneasiness to the Catholic party: for although it did not approve, it yet seemed to favor error, by tying up the tongue of truth. Some have gone so far as to say, that Honorius was a real Monothelite; this is not true.

Sergius had now all he wanted. By the suppression of certain terms, he freely dispersed his venomous doctrines among the people; and that neither the imperial nor the episcopal authority might be wanting to influence their belief, he brought forward an imperial ordinance, to which he gave his patriarchal sanction in a most solemn manner. This ordinance, or *Ecthesis*, as it was called, denounced heavy penalties against every one, who should assert

either one or two wills in Jesus Christ. Sergius did not long survive this finishing stroke of all his other crimes. He died in 639; Pyrrhus, a Monothelite monk, succeeded him. The *Ecthesis* was sent to Rome; Honorius was dead; his successor, Severinus, lived not long enough to receive it. John IV., received and condemned it; upon which Heraclius, as if pricked with remorse, publicly declared that Sergius, and not he, was the author of that censured composition. He died soon after, leaving his son and grandson, Constantine and Constans, the successive inheritors of his crown and heresy. Constantine reigned but a few months. To heresy, his son, Constans, added tyranny and persecution. He published a second edict, which he called the *Type*, in favor of the reigning error, and sent it into Italy to be signed by all the bishops there. Martin was then Pope, who, on that occasion, thought he could not remain silent or inactive without betraying the cause of God. He assembled a council of a hundred and five bishops, and in due form condemned the heresy of Monothelism, together with the *Type*, which supported it. Constans vowed revenge; he despatched Theodore Calliopas, his Exarch, with a strict charge to seize Martin, and send him prisoner to Constantinople. It was done. The holy Pope had then to suffer every kind of insult and ill usage that vindictive malice could heap upon him. After many months of confinement with felons in the common jail of Constantinople, he was banished to Chersonesus. There, at the end of two years, he sunk under the weight of his accumulated sufferings, in 655. The church places him amongst her martyrs. Rapacity and oppression continued to mark the reign of Constans, till the hand of an assassin, with one stroke, freed the empire from a tyrant, and the church from a persecutor, in the year 668.

Constantine, surnamed Pogonatus, his orthodox and virtuous son, then mounted the throne. To relieve his suffering subjects, and to heal the wounds which his late predecessors had inflicted on the church, was the first concern of this religious emperor. To settle the point of doctrine, he judged a general council to be absolutely necessary; he consulted the holy See upon the subject; his proposal was approved of, though it did not take place till the year 680, when St. Agatho sat in St. Peter's chair. The pope deputed three legates to preside in his name, viz. Theodore and George, priests, and John, a deacon, who was afterwards Pope. Constantine received them with distinguished marks of respect: upwards of two hundred and sixty bishops, from different parts of the east, arrived at the imperial city about the same time. A large saloon of the palace, called Trullus, was prepared for the place of session. There the bishops assembled, for the first time, on the seventh day of November, 680. Each one sat in order according to the dignity of that See which he represented; the emperor, with thirteen of his principal officers of state, assisted; a book of the holy gospels was placed in the middle, according to custom. The Pope's legates opened the council in a short address, stating in a few words the precise question, for the decision of which they were then called together. The question was simply this. Whether in our Lord Jesus Christ there were two natural wills or only one, two operations or one only, as Sergius and his adherents had asserted. Macarius, the patriarch of Antioch, with his Monothelite party, was there present. The emperor called upon them to state the grounds of their new opinion. They denied the novelty of their opinion, and maintained it to be the ancient doctrine of the Church. The council, having patiently heard all they had to say in support of their system, ordered

all the original letters, that had been written by both parties upon the subject, to be publicly read, and a clear account to be laid before them, what the Gospel said, what the Fathers had written, what the Councils had defined, and what apostolical tradition had handed down upon the point in question. This examination occupied them in eighteen sessions, after which they came to this unanimous decision, that the Monothelites had not proved their assertion, that their doctrine was new and false, that it was contrary to the doctrine of the Apostles, contrary to the decrees of the Councils, and to the writings of the holy Fathers. Their decree is formed in these words, "We define, that in Jesus Christ there are two natural wills, and two natural operations, and we forbid the contrary to be taught." This decree was signed by the apostolical legates in the first place, by two hundred and sixty-five bishops, and lastly by Constantine, the emperor. Thus ended the sixth general Council ten months after it first met; Monothelism in a short time quietly expired, and troubled the Christian world no more.

In the censures which this Council passed upon the authors and abettors of Monothelism, is found the name of Pope Honorius classed with Sergius, Pyrrhus, Cyrus, and Theodore. Hence some writers have hastily inferred, that Honorius erred in faith, taught false doctrine, and was condemned by the sixth Council as a formal heretic. This is asserted by Nilus, by the Magdeburgers, and generally by all those who impugn the Pope's infallibility. On the other side of the question appears St. Maximus, Pope John IV., St. Agatho, Theophanes Isaurus, and almost all the Latin historians, as Bede, Anastasius the librarian, Naucerus, Sabellicus, Platina and others, who style him a Catholic and

holy Pontiff. In fact, nothing ever appeared against Honorius but his two letters, one to Sergius, the patriarch of Constantinople, and the other to Cyrus, the patriarch of Alexandria. In these letters he expressly asserts two natural wills in Christ, and where he speaks of one will only, it is plain from the context what he means, that Christ had not two discordant wills, but that his human will was ever subject to the divine, and always willed one and the same thing. These letters, then, contained no error, they only forbid the naming of one or of two wills, with no other view, than that by such a suppression of terms the spirit of contention might gradually subside, and no open rupture ensue. If Sergius abused the conciliatory measure, which he maliciously solicited and obtained, for the propagation of his errors, that could not make Honorius an heretic, or an abettor, or a teacher of heresy against his own declaration. How then has it happened, that in the acts of the Council we find him classed with the rank of Monothelites? Anastasius, in his history, tells us it was by forgery, which he proves from Theophanes Isaurus, a Greek historian. The heterodox Greeks are proved to have been expert in the art of falsifying and corrupting original acts. A flagrant instance of the kind was discovered in this very sixth Council, respecting the fifth, in which a supposed transaction between Menas and Vigilius, and between Vigilius and Justinian, was spuriously inserted.

That the anathemas and other aspersions on Honorius' character were never uttered by the sixth Council, there is this strong presumption, because in pronouncing them the Council must have been at variance with itself. For the Council had unanimously approved of the whole of St. Agatho's letter to Constantine, which positively asserts that the Roman See had ever remained without the blemish of

any error to that day; which could not be true if Honorius had been a Monothelite. The falsification of the text, and the insertion of Honorius' name, is generally imputed to Theodore, the patriarch of Constantinople, who, being a condemned Monothelite himself, wished to involve Honorius in the same condemnation, that he might lessen the disgrace of his own See, by sharing it with the See of Rome. The falsification being once made, no one can wonder that it should have been transcribed by others without the suspicion of fraud, till discovered by the penetrating eye of judicious criticism.

SECTION VIII.

Celibacy of the Clergy.

(A. D. 692.) ONE of the fairest features in the discipline of the Catholic Church, is the celibacy of her Clergy. The institution is conformable to the spirit of the Gospel, and during the first seven centuries was religiously enforced both in the east and west. "What the Apostles taught," says the second Council of Carthage, "and what antiquity observed, let us also keep." From the words of the context it is clearly evinced, that the council here imposes no new obligation upon the African clergy; it exhorts them to keep and persevere in a practice that was ancient. For in the African church, as St. Austin* witnesses, the celibacy of priests, deacons, and subdeacons flourished from the beginning. This chaste discipline was not confined to Africa; it flourished in every part of the Catholic world, in the oriental

* De adul. conj.

churches of Syria, of Palestine, of Egypt, and of all the west, as St. Jerom shows against Vigilantius. A profession of the purest chastity both in body and mind, according to the apostolic rule, was a requisite qualification for receiving holy orders. Hence, in the ordinary course, none but single men and widowers were admitted to be subdeacons, deacons, priests, and bishops, or if, upon occasions, any married man was chosen for the priesthood, it was upon his promise with a strict obligation, of living continent and separate from his wife in future. To guard the clergy from the temptation, and even the suspicion of violating their promise, the Council of Nice absolutely forbids them to have any woman with them under the same roof, except a mother, a sister, an aunt, or one who can create no suspicion of incontinency. Whenever we find in history mention made of the children of an exemplary priest or bishop, it is always to be understood of children born before the father entered into holy orders, as Mr. Gibbon has observed in his history of the decline and fall of the Roman empire. The penal canons, enacted in different councils during the first ages against such priests or bishops as transgressed, prove at once the existence and the force of that ecclesiastical point of discipline.

Whether any penalties more severe than those already in use, or whether any new injunctions were proposed in the General Council of Nice, and then abandoned on the remonstrance of Paphnutius, no certain conclusion can be drawn. Of any such fact, nothing can be gathered from the genuine acts of that Council, nor from the testimony of any one writer of that century. Upon that account, the whole story of Paphnutius is rejected by many, as a mere fiction, fabricated by Socrates and Zosimus, who are the first that mention it, or if there be any foundation for it, the fact must have been very different from the account given of it by

those authors. Zosimus and Socrates are two Greek historians, who lived and wrote at Constantinople in the following century, under Theodosius the younger; the first an anti-christian lawyer, and a violent declaimer against Constantine and the Christians; the second a partisan of the Novatian heresy, and a foul corrupter of truth; neither of them deemed worthy of much credit, except in such facts as are clear from other evidence. Their evidence, in this matter, is wholly overthrown by that of St. Epiphanius* and St. Jerom,† whom we select from hundreds of others, as of the most incontrovertible authority. St. Epiphanius was a native of Palestine, born before the Council of Nice; St. Jerom was born soon after, and passed many years of his life in Palestine and Syria. In the testimony then, which these two fathers give of the celibacy of the clergy of the east, they speak from their own certain knowledge. Their testimony is clear and explicit; their varacity has never been impeached. To produce quotations would be to engage in useless labor, and to trespass on the brevity of this historical view. They, who desire to inform themselves more at large, and wish not to be deceived by the low retailers of falsehood, may consult the genuine history of Baronius, of Fleury, of Ceiller, &c. They will find that the celibacy of the clergy was, from the beginning, the established discipline of Christ's universal Church, both in the eastern and western hemisphere. To the celibacy of the clergy, as well as to the forty days fast of Lent, is strictly applicable this general maxim, which says, that "whatever practice we find universally established in the Church, without any ecclesiastical ordinance to give it a beginning, is undoubtedly of apostolical institution."

* *Heresi*, 59.

† *Apol. contre Jovi*.

A systematical departure from this primitive practice was devised and adopted by the degenerate Greeks, in the year 692. At the instigation of Paul, the Monothelite patriarch of Constantinople, Justin II., the unworthy son and successor of Constantine Pogonatus, summoned an episcopal synod. Two hundred and eleven bishops obeyed the imperial call. Eleven years had now elapsed since the conclusion of the sixth general Council; they assembled in the same large saloon, called Trullus; from whence this new meeting of the oriental bishops is denominated by some the Council of Trullus, by others the Quinisixth synod, by venerable Bede, the Stray synod. The real design of its convocation was to introduce a new system of ecclesiastical discipline in mitigation of an old one; but the pretended reason held out to the public, was to frame canons, as a supplement to the last two general Councils. The conventicle of Trullus enacted a hundred and two canons, forming a motley composition of old and new, of some good, and of some reprobate rules of discipline. It confirms the ancient law, which forbids bishops to cohabit with their wives, and the clergy to marry after their ordination; but it permits priests, deacons, and subdeacons to continue with the wives they had taken before ordination. This was a novelty unknown to antiquity, sanctioned for the first time by a party under the appearance of episcopal authority.

Justinian's great ambition after that, was to make his conventicle pass for an œcumenical Council, and to impose his heterogeneous canons upon the whole Church. This he knew could not be effected without the approbation of the Roman See. But that approbation, though master of Rome, he could not command. The firm virtue of St. Sergius, who then sat in St. Peter's chair, was not to be shaken by his threats or violence; nor could the vigilance of his

successors, John and Constantine, be surprised into the snares, which were successively laid by the court of Constantinople, to smuggle an apostolical approbation. The spurious canons of Trullus never received the sanction of the holy See, nor was the Catholic purity of the western discipline ever sullied by the carnal innovations of Constantinople.

The successors of St. Agatho, in the Roman pontificate, were St. Leo II., St. Benedict II., John V., Conon, St. Sergius, John VI., John VII., Sisinnius, Constantine, St. Gregory II., St. Gregory III., St. Zacharias. The ecclesiastical writers of this age were St. Maximus, abbot and martyr of the Greek Church, St. Ildephonsus, St. Isidore, and venerable Bede.

CENTURY VIII.

SECTION I.

Extinction of the African Church.

(A. D. 711.) THE growing power of the Saracens, in the seventh century, had left the Christians of Asia but little to enjoy. The empire mourned the loss of its fairest provinces of Palestine, of Syria, of Egypt, and a part of Greece, while religion wept to see her ancient monuments of piety erased, her churches converted into Mahometan mosques, and her people either perverted or enslaved by the sword of infidelity. Emboldened by a series of conquests, the infidels resolved to attempt the reduction of Constantinople itself: they collected an immense force, and began a long and vigorous attack, both by sea and land. From the vigor and skill of Constantine Pogonatus, the emperor, they experienced a resistance which they did not expect. The contest lasted for seven successive years. The infidels wasted the summer in vain attempts against the impregnable walls of the imperial city, and then retreated, for the winter, into the isle of Cyzicus. With the return of spring, they returned to the attack, till tired and disheartened by the fruitless repetition of attack and retreat, year after year, the Caliph consented to a truce of thirty years, and relinquished his baffled enterprise. When the thirty years were elapsed, the Saracens came on again, with a more formidable force. Leo, the Isaurian, who from an obscure station, had crept into the imperial throne, obliged them to retire with shame and dismay, after a siege of fourteen months.

The infidels succeeded better in their undertaking against Africa, where they had no steady troops to engage, no hostile auxiliaries to apprehend, no fortified places to retard their march. From Tripoli, they penetrated through the heart of the country as far as Mauritania; then filing off towards the Mediterranean coast, they unexpectedly appeared before Carthage. Without waiting for the tedious regularity of a siege, the fierce enthusiasts rushed forward to the assault, took the city by storm, slaughtered or enslaved the mass of inhabitants, burnt and tore the buildings from their very foundations, anno 698. Thus Carthage, the metropolis of Africa, the second city of the west, once the rich and powerful rival of ancient Rome, sunk on a sudden into a heap of ruins, and, in process of time, its last remains were so completely effaced, that the place where it stood is scarcely to be ascertained. Every other town in Africa immediately received the savage conquerors, and not so much as the smallest remnant of the Roman power was left in all that extensive country.

But although the Greeks were expelled, the country was not yet subdued. The Moors, an untamed and warlike race, were not so ready to submit. Under the queen Cahina, they made an obstinate stand for some years, till vanquished in a decisive battle, they yielded to the arms and superstition of their Mahometan invaders. Then, as if tired or ashamed of their own native habits, they showed an eagerness of being formed into one nation with them. With the practice of the Alcoran, they adopted the language, the name, and manners of Arabian Mussulmans. From the isthmus of Suez, to the shore of the Atlantic, the name of Greek, of Roman, of Goth and Vandal, was now swept away, and no sign of the Christian religion was even left to mark its extirpation.

On the African coast, over against Gibraltar, stands Ceuta, a strong fortress, possessed then, as it is now, by the kings of Spain. Count Julian at that time commanded in it, and might have bid a defiance to the united arms of Moors and Arabs. But unfortunately for his country and religion, Julian had received an injury, whether imaginary or real it matters not; he had received it from his sovereign, and wickedly resolved to revenge it in a most unchristian manner. He first surrendered the fortress to Mousa, the Saracen General, then offered him his service for the conquest of Spain. The offer was of so atrocious a nature, that the Mahometan could hardly believe him to be serious. Cautious, however, not to show distrust on the one hand, nor to expose himself on the other, to the danger of being betrayed in an undertaking of such risk and magnitude, he sent over a small body of troops to reconnoitre the country, and to sound the disposition of the inhabitants. The report he received favored his ambition. Upon this he ordered Tarik, his lieutenant-general, to embark with an army which he judged sufficient to command success. Tarik sailed across the straits, landed his troops without opposition, and boldly marched into the very heart of Spain, in the year 712.

King Roderic, who had tyrannically usurped the crown, saw, with surprise, a powerful enemy at his gates, before he had been well apprised of his approach. He summoned the strength of the nation to attend him in the field. The summons was not obeyed with that promptitude which the exigency of the state required. The two hostile armies met near Cadiz, a bloody battle decided the fate of Spain, the Christians fled; Roderic, in the flight, found an ignominious grave in the waters of the Boetis or Guadalquivir. In him perished the last of the Gothic kings, who, for near three hundred years, had swayed the Spanish sceptre. In the

following year, Mousa put himself at the head of a Mahometan army, and pursued the advantage he had gained, with the most violent and most terrific acts of extirpation, well knowing, that terror is the most quick and certain means of effecting a great revolution. In his baleful progress through the country, the towns and villages were set on fire, the inhabitants butchered in cold blood, the churches pillaged and profaned; every place, in fine, as far as Saragossa, exhibited such scenes of cruelty, that the remaining towns were terrified into a speedy acceptance of such terms as were offered by the Infidels, to preserve their existence. None indeed were absolutely compelled to abjure the Christian faith; the payment of an annual tribute, entitled them to liberty of conscience, and to follow their ancient form of religious worship. But such alluring baits of seduction were held out to them, that thousands of carnal proselytes exchanged their belief in Christ for the sensual dreams of Mahomet. Mousa removed the seat of government from Toledo to Cordova. There, vested with a power more than regal, an infidel vicegerent under the Caliph of Damascus fixed his residence, and Spain, in a few generations, imbibed the name and manners of the Moors and Arabs.

SECTION II.

Heresy of the Iconoclasts.

(A. D. 730.) WHILE Mahometanism thus waged an exterminating war against the Christian religion in the west, a new heresy, supported by imperial authority, began a furious attack upon the orthodoxy of her doctrine and pious practices in the east. The assassination of the tyrant, Justinian II., and of his young son Tiberius, had extinguished the race of Heraclius. Between the fall of the Heraclian and the rise of the Isaurian family, a short interval of six years is divided into three reigns. Philippicus, who, with a murderous hand, snatched the crown from the brow of Justinian, was soon after compelled to resign it to his secretary Anastasius. Anastasius, in his turn, after a short reign, gave place to his successful competitor, Theodosius III., an obscure officer of the revenue. This weak emperor held, rather than directed the reins of government for fourteen months, then quietly relinquished them to the superior abilities of Leo, general of the oriental troops; after his resignation, he entered amongst the clergy.

Leo III., surnamed the Isaurian, sprung from a plebian family in Isauria, was originally called Conon. In his youth he listed in the guards of Justinian, rose by his active talents to the chief command, and by military favor to the throne of Constantinople. Being vested with the purple, he proudly thought himself qualified for a reformer of religion. Illiterate and ignorant, as nature formed him, he had imbibed early prejudices against the religious respect which he saw paid to holy images, and that respect he called idolatry. It had been the misfortune of the eastern church never to enjoy any long repose. One heresy was no sooner checked

and proscribed, than a new one started up. Error had often found protection in the imperial palace, but now the emperor himself became the founder of a new sect, called the Iconoclasts, or image-breakers. Leo, as if he felt that the imperial diadem had given him understanding, sent forth a public edict, which ordered the images of Jesus Christ, of the Virgin Mary, and the Saints, to be removed out of the churches, on the severest penalties. This extraordinary declaration from the throne, against the ancient and universal practice of the Catholic Church, gave great scandal, and excited loud murmurs at Constantinople. St. German, the patriarch, exerted his zeal against the error without trembling at the anger of his sovereign. By mild persuasion he tried to disabuse the emperor of his mistake; he gently represented to him that the respect paid to holy images was but a relative and inferior honor, intentionally referred to the persons they represent, like the honor exhibited to an emperor or a king in his portrait: that from the time of the Apostles, this relative honor had been paid to the images of Christ and his blessed Mother, and that it could not be excused from the imputation of rashness and impiety to condemn so holy and so innocent an institution. Leo was too ignorant, even of the first rudiments of religion, to comprehend the patriarch's manner of reasoning upon the subject. He obstinately insisted upon his opinion being right, and, strange as it may seem, he was too grossly ignorant to distinguish between an absolute and a relative honor, nor could he be prevailed upon to recall his edict. The patriarch acquainted St. Gregory II., the Roman pontiff, with what had passed between the emperor and him. The Pope commended his zeal, and exhorted him to be steady in the cause of truth.

Leo commenced his sacrilegious war against the Saints of God with all the fierce fury of a fanatic. He commanded

all their images to be collected, and to be carried to the market-place and there burnt; all paintings on the church walls to be effaced, and the walls to be whitewashed, so that no sacred representation might appear. It was usual with the Greeks to paint their church-pictures upon the wall, instead of painting them upon wood or canvass. Over the entrance of the palace stood a large crucifix, which is said to have been placed there by the order of Constantine the Great. By the order of Leo, the Iconoclast, an executioner mounted a ladder, and with an axe struck the figure of our crucified Redeemer in the face. A crowd of women gathered round, and, by pulling the foot of the ladder, endeavored to put a stop to the impious deed. The man fell; but the sacred image was hewn to pieces; the women were massacred, by an imperial order, without mercy; the venerable patriarch St. German, at the age of fourscore, was driven into banishment, and Anastasius, a temporizing priest, was thrust, by an armed force, into his place. Anno 729.

In the midst of these troubles, died the holy Pope Gregory II., and was replaced by another saint of the same name. This zealous pontiff, soon after his consecration, wrote a long epistle to the emperor, strongly recommending him to recall his edict, and to desist from his irreligious purpose. Amongst other things, he tells him, "Our churches in their rude state are but the work of the builders, a rough fabric of stone, of wood, of brick, of lime, and mortar. But within they are adorned with rich paintings; with historical representations of Jesus Christ and his Saints. On these the converted gentiles, the neophytes, and children of the faithful, gaze with no less profit than delight. In these they behold the mysteries of our religion displayed before their eyes; by these they are animated to the practice of virtue, and silently taught to raise their affections and hearts to

God. But of these external helps to virtue and religious information, you have deprived the faithful, you have profanely stript the churches of their sacred ornaments, which so much contributed to edify, to instruct, and animate. In doing this, you have usurped a power which God has not given to the sceptre. The empire and the priesthood have their respective powers, differing from each other in their use and object. As it belongs not to the bishop to govern within the palace, and to distribute civil dignities, so it does not belong to the emperor to command within the church, or to assume a spiritual jurisdiction, which Christ has left solely to the ministers of his altar. Let each one of us move and remain within the sphere to which he is called, as the Apostle admonishes."

On a man, equally ignorant and perverse, like Leo, these just remonstrances had no effect. Near the palace was a public library, founded by the emperors in better days, containing more than thirty thousand volumes. The librarian was a scholar of distinguished merit, and had under him twelve others, who gratuitously gave public lessons upon religion and the different branches of polite literature. Leo spared neither promises nor threats to draw these learned men over to his party. But when he found they were not to be gained by either, he gave orders to have them locked up in their apartment within the library, a quantity of faggots and dry wood to be piled around, and then set on fire. The librarians, books, and building, were all consumed together. The tyrant stretched his sacrilegious fury from Constantinople to Rome, where his power was rather nominal than real. His orders were, that all the sacred images and paintings should there likewise be removed out of the churches, and publicly burnt. The Romans refused obedience, and openly revolted. The Iconoclast grew not wiser

by misfortunes; he persisted in his error and his violences till death carried him off, in the year 741, after a turbulent and impious reign of twenty-four years. His son, Constantine Copronymous, succeeded him.

SECTION III.

Germany receives the Faith.

(A. D. 740.) GRIEVOUS were the losses which religion had sustained from the succession of various heresies in the east, as well as from the rapid progress of Mahometanism, both in the east and west. But through the sweet disposition of an all-ruling Providence, it was so ordained, that if she lost ground in one part of the globe, she gained in another. Great Britain had emerged, a second time, from the dark shades of infidelity, into which the Saxon conquest had again cast her, and by the purity of her faith, by the vigor of her discipline, by the regularity of her clergy, by the celebrity, in fine, of her monasteries and public schools, began to shine amidst the Catholic nations of the west.

For these precious acquisitions, England was chiefly indebted to the zeal and learning of the incomparable Archbishop, St. Theodore. Under the direction of that enlightened prelate, the English church attained that state of maturity which enabled her to furnish the sacred ministry with clergymen of her own native growth. The bishops were generally taken from the great abbeys, those useful nurseries of piety and learning. The extensive diocese of Wessex was canonically divided into two, of which the episcopal seats were Winchester and Shirborn. The

virtuous and learned Aldelmus was the first bishop of the latter, in the year 705. The ecclesiastical and civil powers went hand in hand for the mutual support of their respective rights, and both concurred to render the people good and happy. To make these blessings permanent, a numerous assembly of the state was held at a place called Becanceld, in 694. There, by Withred king of Kent, with his nobles on one hand, and by St. Britwald, the primate, with the Bishop of Rochester and their clergy on the other, it was solemnly enacted and declared, that as the supreme power in civil matters was vested solely in the crown, so the sacred right of ruling and directing spiritual matters belonged exclusively to the mitre; and that what was once given and consecrated to God, no temporal power had a right to take away.

The devout votaries of religion with gratitude acknowledged the divine goodness, which had so mercifully brought them to the true faith, and zealously wished to repay the gift, by contributing in their turn to bring others to a participation of the same happiness. With pious grief they beheld their mother country still grovelling in the dark, and wholly ignorant of the way that leads to everlasting life. A holy desire of carrying the name and faith of Jesus Christ to the Pagans of Germany, inspired many to start from their silent cells of contemplation, and to engage in the apostolical labors of a foreign mission. Among the English missionaries, who went to preach the gospel to their idolatrous kindred on the Continent, St. Willibrord and St. Boniface are the most distinguished.

St. Willibrord was born in Northumberland, about the year 658, and embraced a monastic life in the abbey of Rippon, founded by St. Wilfrid. Being ordained priest, he expressed to his abbot the strong inclination he had to go

and introduce Christianity into the country which had given birth to their forefathers. Being indulged in his request, he set sail for Friesland, anno 690, in company with eleven other missionaries, who joined him from different monasteries, to share in the labors and the merit of his apostolical expedition. They landed near the mouth of the Rhine, from whence they repaired to Utrecht. There Pepin, of Herstal, surnamed the Big, courteously received them with the promise of protection. But Willibrord, reflecting with the Apostles,* that they could never preach with any prospect of success unless lawfully sent, judged it necessary that this mission should be sanctioned by the apostolic See. With this view he went to Rome, and addressed himself to Pope Sergius for liberty to preach the gospel to the Pagan tribes about the lower Rhine; Sergius applauded his zeal, and dismissed him with full powers. Wonderful was the success with which God crowned the labors of these religious men. Idolatry fell to the ground, Christian Churches rose, and the gift of miracles confirmed the sacred truths they taught. In 696 Willibrord went a second time to Rome; Sergius was still living. His holiness received the saintly missionary with singular marks of esteem, ordained him archbishop of the Frisons, and gave him the pallium, with a grant to fix his See in whatever part of the country he might judge most fit. He fixed it at Utrecht. There, and in the adjacent provinces, he never ceased to labor for the glory of God and salvation of souls, till worn out with age, he died about the year 740. By the indefatigable zeal of this saint, and his pious colleagues, the Roman Catholic faith was planted in Friesland, Holland, Zeland, and other parts of the Netherlands.

St. Boniface, called the Apostle of Germany, was born at Crediton, in Devonshire, anno 680. He received the first

*Rom. c. x, v. 15.

rudiments of his literary and religious education at Exeter. For there he passed his youth, and there he took the religious habit, under the holy abbot Wolphard. From Exeter his superiors removed him to the monastery of Nutcell, in the diocese of Winchester, which then flourished under the direction and encouragement of the learned abbot, Winbert. The talents he there displayed, and the extraordinary progress he made in the study of poetry, rhetoric and the holy scriptures, soon acquired him a splendid reputation. At the age of thirty he was ordained priest; the report of St. Willibrord's success in propagating the faith among the northern inhabitants of Germany, kindled in his breast a holy ambition of joining him in the same evangelical enterprise. He obtained leave from his abbot to pass over into Friesland; he found the country too deeply engaged in war to listen to the word of God; he made but a short stay at Utrecht, and returned to his monastery. The abbot dying soon after, he was chosen to replace him. The humble Boniface declined the honor, alledging that he was called to labor for the conversion of Infidels. He procured another to be chosen abbot in his place, through the interposition of Daniel, the pious and learned bishop of Winchester, from whom he received commendatory letters to Pope Gregory II., and set off for Rome in 719. His holiness showed him singular marks of kindness and esteem, commended his zeal, and gave him ample powers to preach the gospel to all the infidel nations of Germany.

The apostolic man lost no time, put himself immediately upon his journey, crossed the lower Alps, and penetrated through Bavaria into Thuringia. In Bavaria he found many Christians, but so depraved in principle and morals, that they seemed little better than the very heathens with whom they conversed. He brought back many of these

degenerate Christians to a sense of their duty, and converted numbers of the heathens. Peace being restored in Friesland, he repaired thither, and jointly labored for three years with St. Willibrord in that fruitful mission. From thence he went into Hesse and Saxony, where he reaped a plentiful harvest of souls. The idols, at his preaching, sunk into contempt, and true religion displayed her triumphant banner through the country. The Pope, being apprised of the wonders wrought by the holy missionary, called him to Rome, and ordained him bishop. Boniface, now dignified with a new character, returned with fresh zeal into Hesse, and continued his spiritual conquests. Seeing a vast field opening more and more upon his hands, he solicited and received a new supply of laborers from England, whom he stationed, where their services were most wanted, in Hessa and Thuringia. Upon the accession of Gregory III. to the pontificate, in 731, Boniface sent to consult him on certain difficulties; Gregory took that opportunity of sending him a pall, to be used when he celebrated the divine mysteries, or consecrated bishops. He at the same time constituted him Primate of all Germany, with a power to erect new bishoprics, and to fix his own Metropolitan See in any city he should judge most expedient. He fixed on Mentz. He established four new bishoprics in Bavaria, at Saltzburg, at Freisinghein, at Ratisbon, and Ackstat; one likewise at Erford for Thuringia; another at Baraburg for Hesse, since translated to Paderborn; and a third at Wurtzburg for Franconia. All these establishments were confirmed by St. Gregory III., in 739, and by his successor, Zachary, in 742. At his request, St. Zachary granted him the privilege of appointing himself a successor in the See of Mentz. This privilege he made use of in favor of St. Lullus, an English monk of Malmesbury, in 754. His chief motive

for making this appointment, and of resigning his See, was that he might be at liberty to extend his excursions for the conversion of souls. For his zeal allowed him no rest, and he never thought that enough was yet done, as long as there were heathens to be converted. The rude idolaters of North Friesland, on whom the light of Christianity had not yet risen, excited his compassion. Though bending under the weight of age, Boniface went amongst them; his venerable aspect and engaging manner won their attention: he gained thousands to Christ. The infernal enemy of mankind saw his kingdom falling, and in a way of being totally subverted, should his successful adversary be permitted to live. A band of Pagan ruffians conspired against his life; they unexpectedly rushed upon him in the very act of administering the sacrament of confirmation to his new converts, and so became the bloody instruments of crowning the saint's illustrious virtues with the glory of martyrdom, in the year 754.

SECTION IV.

Pepin, King of France.

(A. D. 752.) Two years before the martyrdom of St. Boniface, a memorable revolution happened in France, which gave a new race of kings to that monarchy. When the numerous hordes of barbarians from the north invaded the southern parts of Europe, they were led on by a king, raised to that dignity by the elective choice of his followers. Among the Franks the form of election was soon laid aside, and the crown made hereditary. The change began at the

death of Meroveus, in 456, from whom his royal successors are denominated the Merovingian race. Upon the extinction of that race the Carlovinian line began, so called from Charles Martel, the founder of it. From the reign of Clovis II., to Childeric III., which includes a century, the kings of France had sunk into the inglorious habit of an inactive life, and were no more than mere titular sovereigns without command, splendid cyphers of royalty, without power. Too dignified or too indolent to be at any trouble, they let go the helm of government, and committed it to a despotic magistrate, styled, at first, the mayor of the palace, and afterwards, with additional honor, the duke and prince of France. The title and office became hereditary. It was held by Pepin the Big, who left it, in 714, to his natural son Charles, surnamed Martel, from his martial prowess. Charles, in that capacity, governed France for six and twenty years.

During his administration, France was miserably harassed by repeated incursions of the Moors and Arabs, the conquerors of Spain. Abderame, their chief, crossed the Pyrenees, with a formidable army, in quest of new victories and plunder; he quickly overran the provinces of Aquitaine and Languedoc; his standards triumphed on the walls of Tours and Sens, and his detachments carried desolation through the kingdom of Burgundy, as far as the cities of Lyons and Basancon. The monasteries and churches were the devoted prey of their rapacity and fanatic fury. Eudes, the valiant duke of Aquitaine, made several bold attempts to drive back the foe, which, like a torrent, still came rolling on with fresh force. Twice he engaged him in the field, and twice was overthrown, with such a loss of men, that, according to the mournful confession of the survivors, God alone could count the slain. Charles Martel then, forgetting the private

quarrel he had with Eudes, joined him, with all the forces he had, against the Infidels, who threatened ruin to the whole country. The Saracens had advanced into the very centre of France. Charles came up with them between Tours and Poitiers. A general battle was fought; it was obstinate and bloody; Abderame fell; the victory of the Franks was complete and final. The broken remnants of the Mahometan army made good their retreat into Spain, nor did any of their enthusiastic adventurers ever presume to trespass again upon the French territory.

Charles Martel died in 741, leaving two sons behind him, Carloman and Pepin, surnamed the Short. The dignity of Mayor devolved on Carloman, as an hereditary right, which he held for six years. Then, being moved with the desire of serving God more perfectly, he divested himself of his worldly honors, and put on the monastic habit at Rome, which he received from the hands of Pope Zachary. His brother Pepin succeeded him in the government of France. Pepin possessed many princely qualities; but a tinge of ambition cast a dark shade upon them. Having the power, he coveted the title of King. The states were at his devotion; he called them together in the year 752, to settle the arrangement of his high pretensions. He had already given an ambiguous hint of it to Pope Zachary; the answer of that wary pontiff was, without entering upon the question of right, that for the preservation of good order, the royal power and title should seemingly go together. This answer being reported, the states unanimously chose Pepin for their king. Childeric, the Stupid, had enjoyed the empty title for nine years. By a vote of his perjured subjects, he was in a moment hurled from his throne, and then consigned to the abbey of St. Bertin, where he ended his days. His son, Theodoric, underwent the like confinement in the

monastery of Fontenelle. Upon this civil but forced demise of Childeric, the last of the first line of kings in France, rose the royal house of Pepin, whose descendants swayed the sceptre for two hundred and thirty-five years, when, in 987, prince Charles of Lorrain, the lawful heir, was set aside by a similar vote of the nobility, to make room for Hugh Capet, the powerful earl of Paris, founder of a third race of kings. Pepin caused himself to be crowned at Soissons, by St. Boniface; all the states of the kingdom, and many bishops, assisted at the pompous ceremony.

The Christian faith continued to make further progress through the northern tract of Germany, by the preaching of St. Willehad, a native of Northumberland. The conversions wrought by the Saints, Willibrord and Boniface, excited in this holy man a strong desire of engaging in the same meritorious enterprise. He landed in Friesland about the year 772, and from thence began to preach the word of God till he came to the banks of the Elbe. He crossed over that river, and was the first who announced the name of Christ to those tribes that inhabited the country as far as the Oder. God blessed his labors with wonderful success. At the request of Charlemagne, and by the authority of Pope Adrian, he was ordained bishop of the Saxons and fixed his episcopal See at Bremen. He died in 789. His body lies interred in the cathedral of that city; his name is there held in veneration; his eminent virtues have enrolled him among the Saints.

SECTION V.

Liberality of King Pepin to the Holy See.

(A. D. 755.) THE violence of Leo, the Iconoclast, having driven the Roman people to throw off their allegiance to the emperors of Constantinople, the style of the Roman senate and people was revived, but the spirit was fled. Rome, closely surrounded by jealous enemies, had neither energy nor resources within itself, to support the independence of a republic. The love of war and rapine was congenial to the temper of the Lombards. Luitprand, their king, took advantage of the weakness of the new republic. Having nothing to fear from the Greeks, he invaded the province of Romagna with a numerous army, advanced to the gates of Rome, and summoned the senate to receive him as their lawful sovereign. Pope Gregory presented himself before him. The king listened to his just remonstrances, and withdrew his troops. He entered into a treaty of peace with the senate, in consequence of which, the conquered towns were restored to the duchy of Rome, and the holy See recovered that part of St. Peter's patrimony which had fallen into the hands of the Lombards. Luitprand died in the year 744. His nephew, Hildebrand, succeeded him, but at the end of seven months was deposed, to make room for Rachis, the duke of Frioul. This prince, after a pacific reign of five years, exchanged his royal robes for the habit of a monk, in the abbey of Mount Cassino, and his brother, Astolphus, stepped into the throne.

Astolphus, an ambitious and perfidious prince, broke the peace with Rome, and threatened to put every Roman to the sword, if they did not receive him for their sovereign. He reduced the exarchate of Ravenna to his obedience ;

Rome was his next object. The savage manner in which Astolphus carried on the war, rather resembled that of a fierce barbarian, than of a Christian prince. In his march, he spread terror and desolation through the country; the corn was every where destroyed, the vines cut up by the root, the husbandmen wantonly murdered, the monks torn with whips, religious women violated, churches burnt and plundered, the altars stripped and profaned. Sucking infants were even snatched from their mother's arms, and butchered before their eyes. Pope Stephen III., who had succeeded Stephen II., the successor of Zachary, neglected no peaceful means that zeal and compassion could suggest, to stop these horrid outrages. But finding the tyrant deaf to his remonstrances, he sent to implore military succors from the emperor Constantine Copronymous, in whose name, as the successor of Constantine the Great, the government of Rome and Italy was still exercised. The imperial Iconoclast was, at that time, too deeply engaged in warring against the Saints to think of sending troops against the Lombards, or of recovering his own authority in Italy. Whatever may have been his resentment against the Popes for opposing his innovations in religion, or against the Roman people for not submitting to his tyranny, sound policy should have directed him to embrace the opportunity offered by Stephen, of re-establishing his power in that part of the empire. From his father's despotic conduct, he might have learned that the system of persecution, and the orders given to procure the seizure or assassination of the common Father of the faithful, had only contributed to exasperate and confirm the Romans in their revolt.

But zeal for religion and the love of his country, would not suffer Stephen to remain idle in the general distress. He resolved to seek from France the protection which he could

not obtain from Constantinople. Having implored the assistance of heaven by public prayer and fasting, he left Rome, passed through the hostile country of the Lombards, crossed the Alps, and went an humble suppliant to Pepin, king of France, in 754. Pepin received him with all the marks of honor and respect due to the successor of St. Peter, and generously assented to all he asked. The Lombard war was resolved on. But before he put his troops in motion, he sent deputies to Astolphus, at the Pope's request, for the sake of sparing the effusion of Christian blood, and strongly exhorted him to do justice to religion and the empire. The fierce Lombard answered him with threats and insults. Pepin then, in company with the Pope, marched his army into Italy. Astolphus, conscious of his own weakness, shut himself up in Pavia, where, after a short siege, he consented to accept the terms of peace, which the French Monarch held out to him. Upon the most solemn promises, in which his nobles joined him, he agreed to restore the towns he had taken, and to put every thing in the state it was before the war. Pepin took his word, contrary to Stephen's advice, and returned to France. Scarce was he gone, when the perfidious Lombard re-commenced hostilities, and laid siege to Rome. All the former ravages were now renewed. Stephen had recourse to his royal protector a second time. Pepin, without loss of time, put himself at the head of his army, and hastened into Lombardy. His march was equally rapid and successful. Astolphus durst not face him. One town after another submitted to Pepin, as soon as he appeared before it. In one short campaign, of the year 756, the valiant monarch of France wrested from the Lombards the exarchate of Ravenna, with the greatest part of its dependencies, Bologna, Ferrara, and the Pentapolis, which stretches along the Adriatic coast, from Rimini to Ancona,

and its midland direction as far as the Appenine. All this extent of territory, with two and twenty towns, now by right of conquest, belonged to king Pepin, either to be retained or to be disposed of by him, as in his wisdom he should judge fit. By a solemn grant he bestowed the whole upon Pope Stephen III., and his successors in St. Peter's chair for ever.

The Greek ambassadors, who accompanied the king from France in this expedition, and foresaw how it was likely to end, had at first endeavored to prevent it, and were now very importunate in their demands to have the conquered towns and country restored to the eastern empire. To expect or to demand, that the most Christian king of France should, at his own expense, fight and conquer for an oriental despot, who, at that very time was employing the most cruel violence of persecution to overturn the ancient belief and practice of the Church, was folly and presumption. No ambitious view, said Pepin to the Greeks, no thirst of worldly glory urged me to the war: it was not to encourage the abuse of power, or to court the favor of any one man upon earth, but to scourge the tyrants of Italy, to succor the oppressed, and to expiate my sins, that I twice passed the Alps, and exposed my life so often in the field; God granted me victory; in return, I have consecrated my conquests to his honor, and the service of his church, and no human consideration shall ever tempt me to take back the gift which I have once bestowed. By this liberal donation of King Pepin, Pope Stephen became the temporal sovereign of an extensive country, with the independent power of distributing temporal honors, of imposing taxes, of coining money, and enacting laws for the civil government of his new territorial subjects.

During the first seven centuries, the See of Rome, like other episcopal Sees, had no other temporal possessions than such as were bequeathed to it, from time to time, by the pious liberality of the faithful. These donations were considered as the patrimony of St. Peter, consecrated to the divine service, and for the assistance of the poor. The Pope, though supreme in spirituals, as the successor of St. Peter and Vicar of Jesus Christ over the whole church upon earth, had hitherto been in temporal matters subject to the emperor, and bound, like other ecclesiastical subjects, by the laws of the empire. To the ancient patrimony of farms and houses, was now added the princely dominion of cities and provinces. This earthly dominion, which the sovereign Pontiff derives from the liberality of men, neither increases nor diminishes the spiritual prerogatives which he derives from Christ. By a new revolution of human events, the temporal power may be torn away, the spiritual power will remain unimpaired to the end of time.

SECTION VI.

Violence of the Iconoclasts.

(A. D. 775.) CONSTANTINE COPRONYMOUS succeeded his father Leo in the throne of Constantinople, in the year 741. Fostered in the lap of ignorance and infidelity, he even outstripped his father in acts of violence, and became a monster of impiety, of cruelty and lust. With redoubled fury he carried on the persecution which his father had begun. In the year 754, he assembled a convocation of bishops, to the number of 338, which he dignified with the

appellation of a general council, although not a single patriarch assisted at it, and no representative even appeared for the great Sees of Rome, of Alexandria, of Antioch and Jerusalem. The See of Constantinople was vacant. The bishops met in the imperial palace, not to decide any controverted point of doctrine, but to sanction, by a servile prevarication, whatever the emperor should dictate to them. In compliance with his mandate, all honor paid to holy images was declared to be idolatrous, the use of them was condemned, and rigorously forbidden. To give weight to these sacrilegious decrees, Constantine, the complaisant bishop of Sylee, was installed by the emperor's own hand in the patriarchal chair of Constantinople. The Iconoclasts triumphed; those Catholics who had the courage to step forward in defence of truth, were singled out and dragged to prison. In all the cruel scenes exhibited by persecuting Arians, Nestorians, Eutychians, and Monothelites, Constantinople had seen nothing more cruel than what was done by the Iconoclasts. The theatre, the streets, and forum, daily flowed with Christian blood. Some were scourged with whips, some had their eyes plucked out; others had their noses slit, or their ears cut off; others had their beards daubed with pitch, and set on fire; others, in derision had the images of saints, that were painted on thick boards, broken, by giving them hard blows upon their heads. These barbarous exhibitions were the tyrant's diversion, the rehearsal of them was his usual entertainment at table; sometimes he would be present at them, and feast his eyes with the sight of mangled saints and agonizing martyrs.

From the capital, the flame of persecution spread through the provinces. An exterminating warfare was declared and carried on, not only against the images and pictures, but also against the relics of saints. Their shrines were

borne away by sacrilegious hands, and thrown into the rivers or common shores; their bones, in some places, were burnt with the bones of animals, that their ashes might not be distinguished and collected by the faithful. To such as expressed their disapprobation of these impious doings, no mercy was shown. The governors of the provinces, eager to secure the emperor's favor, seemed to vie with each other in their proceedings against the Catholics. How fatal to religion those proceedings were, we learn from the temporising conduct of those bishops who composed the Iconoclastical convention of Constantinople. In others, the grace of fortitude triumphed in a conspicuous manner. In a monastery near Nicomedia, lived a saintly abbot, called Stephen, in universal repute for his piety and austerity of life. Copronymus wished to gain him over to his sect: he issued an order for him to repair to Constantinople, not doubting but he should be able to convince him by force of argument. For, notwithstanding his extreme ignorance in religious matters, Copronymus had the vanity to think himself an expert reasoner, and an acute logician. Upon the abbot's appearing before him, he thus proposed his mighty argument. "Stupid as thou art, canst thou not conceive, that one may trample on the image of Christ, without injury to Christ himself?" Stephen approached, and taking from his bosom a piece of money, stamped with the image of the emperor, said: "I then may treat this image in the same manner, without failing in respect towards my sovereign." Upon this he threw the emperor's coin upon the ground, and trampled it under his feet. The court officers, who were standing round, put themselves in readiness, and waited but for the order to rush on and seize the abbot as a traitor. The venerable abbot, who observed and read their indignation in their looks, with a sigh exclaimed: "What! Shall

it be deemed a capital offence to cast down the image of an earthly prince, and no offence to cast into the fire the image of Jesus Christ, the sovereign king of heaven and earth?" Reason had no reply to make. Arbitrary power took the place of justice, the saint was sentenced to a painful death. With impious and sanguinary deeds like these, Copronymous filled up the measure of his cruel and inglorious reign of thirty-four years, when he left his son Leo IV., to inherit his crown and his errors. Leo, a feeble prince, followed his father's steps in harassing the church during the whole five years that he reigned. Feeling himself near his end, he appointed his wife, the empress Irene, whom he thought an Iconoclast, to be the guardian of the empire, and of their son Constantine VI., a minor, not ten years old. Irene, since so well known in history for her ambition and vicissitudes in life, was an Athenian by birth; the death of her parents left her an orphan at a tender age; her beauty and personal accomplishments opened her a way to the throne of Constantinople.

SECTION VII.

Second General Council of Nice.

(A. D. 787.) By the death of Leo, Irene was at liberty to profess the Catholic belief respecting images, which she had hitherto kept to herself. To fill the patriarchal chair of Constantinople, Paul, a learned native of Cyprus, had been chosen, against his will, a little before Leo's death. At his election he was called upon to subscribe the imperial decree against the respect due to holy images. He weakly yielded ;

remorse succeeded; he privately withdrew into a monastery, vacated his See, and professed himself a monk, that by penance he might expiate the sin into which his pusillanimity had betrayed him. He died soon after. The empress assembled her council, to which she called men well versed in ecclesiastical affairs, and with them deliberated on the choice of an able and orthodox successor to the late patriarch Paul. There was but one opinion; the public voice concurred in favor of Tarasius, the secretary of state. Tarasius was of a patrician race, had hitherto been employed about the court, was still a layman, but of strict honor and approved virtue. When Irene communicated to him her design of promoting him to the patriarchal chair, he strongly objected, and could by no persuasion be prevailed upon to accept the charge, but on condition that a General Council should be called to redress the evils which Iconoclasm had brought upon the church. Irene pledged her word that it should be done. Tarasius then consented to his election, and was consecrated on Christmas day in 784. According to ancient custom, he sent his profession of faith and synodical letters to the Pope; Irene at the same time wrote in her own and her son's name to desire that a General Council might speedily be called. Adrian was then Pope, who succeeded Stephen IV., the successor of St. Paul. Paul was the brother and successor of Stephen III.

Adrian gave a long and gracious answer to the imperial letters, approved the project of a council, and appointed two legates to preside in his name, Peter, archpriest of the Roman church, and Peter, abbot of St. Sabas' monastery at Rome. It was at first intended that the bishops should assemble at Constantinople; but, upon reflection, that the Iconoclasts were there very numerous, and inclined to be turbulent, that the pretorian guards were moreover in a

state of mutiny, and good order in danger of being broken, it was judged more prudent for them to meet at Nice, where they would have nothing to fear from the violence of a mob, and be wholly free to discuss and decide the point in question.

Three hundred and seventy-seven bishops from Greece, from Thrace, from Natolia, from the islands of the Archipelago, from Sicily and Italy, assembled at Nice, in the church of St. Sophia, on the 24th of September, 787. The extreme jealousy of the Saracen government would not allow the Catholic patriarchs of Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem, to leave their home. John and Thomas, priests and monks of virtue and learning, came legally deputed by them, the first by Theodoret and Elias of Antioch and Jerusalem, the latter by Politian of Alexandria. Two commissaries assisted on the part of the emperor, and sat below the choir of the church. Trasius opened the council. Among the bishops there were many, who, under the tyranny of Copronymous, had betrayed the truth. These were now called upon to abjure their error, and to make a public profession of their faith; which they readily did with every mark of sincerity and of true repentance. This employed the council for the first three sessions, at the conclusion of which Trasius thus expressed the joyful feelings of his heart: "All animosity is now at an end, the wall of separation is removed; the east, the west, the south, the north are all of one accord; all are united under the same yoke of Christ."

The fourth session was taken up in producing the testimonies of ancient fathers, who assert the honor due to holy images and pictures. In the fifth session it set forth the conduct of the Iconoclasts, which is shown to resemble that of Pagans, Jews, Saracens, and ancient Heretics, in their

violences against the professors of Catholic belief; in the sixth are refuted the frivolous objections which had been started in the conventicle held by Copronymous at Constantinople in 754. In the seventh session, the bishops formed their decision upon the matter to the following effect: "After mature deliberation and discussion, we solemnly declare that the holy pictures and images, especially of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour, of his immaculate Mother our Lady, of the angels and other Saints, are to be set up in churches as well as in other places, that at the sight of them the faithful may remember what they represent; that they are to be venerated and honored, not indeed with that supreme honor and worship, which is called Latria, and belongs to God alone, but with a relative and inferior honor, such as is paid to the cross, to the gospel, and other holy things, by the use of incense and of burning lights. For the honor paid to images, passes to the archetypes or things represented, and he who reveres the image, reveres the person it represents. Such has been the practice of our pious forefathers, such is the tradition of the Catholic Church transmitted to us; this ecclesiastical tradition we closely hold conformably to the injunction given by St. Paul to the Thessalonians."* This decree was signed by the Roman legates in the first place, then by the patriarch of Constantinople, after him by the two representatives of the oriental patriarchs, and finally by all the bishops present, to the number of 305. The empress Irene sent them an invitation to come to Constantinople, where, in the eighth and last session, held on the twenty-third of October, all that had been done by the Council at Nice, was confirmed and signed by Irene and Constantine, her son. The decisions were solemnly published, and received with the loud acclamations of the applauding multitude.

* 2 Thea. c. li. v. 14.

SECTION VIII.

Coronation of Charlemagne.

(A. D. 800.) KING PEPIN of France, after an active and prosperous reign of sixteen years, made a Christian end in the monastery of St. Denis, near Paris, in 768, and was there buried; from that time St. Denis became the burial place of the kings of France. By will, he divided his wide dominions between his two sons, Charles and Carloman. The latter dying in the year 771, the voice of the people proclaimed Charles sole monarch of all France. The title of Pepin to the throne was first founded, as we have seen, in the choice of the states, and by a similar choice, that title was now confirmed to the Carlovingian race, with a dire anathema against any future attempt, that might possibly be made to transfer it to some other family. Charles, on account of his illustrious actions, has obtained the appellation of Magne, that is Great, like many other princes, but by a peculiar usage of language, the title has been blended with his Christian name.

Charlemagne distinguished himself by his military achievements in Spain, in Germany, and Italy. In Spain he recovered many important places from the Moors, and made himself master of the whole country between the Pyrennean mountains and the river Ebro. In Germany he compelled the Saxons, who had invaded the French frontier, to acknowledge him for their sovereign. This conquest had been once made by his father Pepin; but the indignant Pagans had rebelled, and re-assumed their independence. The better to secure their obedience, after a second conquest, Charlemagne procured zealous preachers of the gospel to be sent amongst them. The fierce tribes had already

heard the tidings of Christianity announced amongst them, by St. Willehad, though with no great success; they now listened with greater attention, laid aside their savage manners with the errors of idolatry, and, by becoming Christians, became civilized men and obedient subjects. In Italy the insolence of the Lombards had been checked by King Pepin, but not subdued. After the death of Astolphus, in 756, Desiderius, the Duke of Tuscany, was suffered to succeed him in the throne, upon the condition of his restoring to the Roman state the towns belonging to it, which he promised faithfully to do, but never performed. Having once grasped the sceptre, and no power being near to control his pretensions, he continued, like his predecessors, to harass the Romans with repeated claims and incursions upon their territory. Pope Adrian at length had recourse to Charlemagne, who lent a gracious ear to his just complaints, and immediately marched a powerful army into Italy. Against an attack so formidable and so sudden, Desiderius had nothing but the ramparts of Pavia, his capital, to oppose. On the defence of that single town, hung the fate of all Lombardy. The French closely invested it on every side, with a determination to starve it into a surrender. At the end of two years, the besieged monarch being reduced to the last extremity, without hope or the expectation of succor, surrendered his capital and his crown to Charlemagne in 774. The whole kingdom of the Lombards thus fell under the power of France, after it had lasted without much renown 206 years. Desiderius, the last of their kings, was sent prisoner into France, where he devoutly passed and ended his days in the monastery of Corbie, while his former subjects, by being left in possession of their own laws, became the brethren rather than the subjects of their conquerors.

From Pavia, Charlemagne visited Rome, where he was received with all the honors due to his exalted rank. Pope Adrian took the opportunity of requesting him to confirm his royal father's grant to the holy See. The religious monarch not only ratified, but moreover amplified King Pepin's donation, by annexing to it a part of the domain which he had conquered from the Lombards. After this, Charlemagne employed his authority in order to silence a dispute, which began to cause no small disturbance in the Church. Elipand, the archbishop of Toledo, and Felix, bishop of Urgel, in Spain, had publicly asserted, that Jesus Christ was the Son of God by adoption only, like us, and not by nature. The doctrine was new; the character of its teachers gave it a name; many were seduced by it, Charlemagne caused the assertion to be examined in a national council of bishops. They met at Frankfort, upon the Mein, to the number of about three hundred, in the year 794; the Pope deputed two bishops, Theophylact and Stephen, to assist as his legates. The doctrine of Elipand and Felix was diligently examined, discussed, and condemned as heretical.

In this assembly, the decisions of the second Council of Nicé, respecting holy images, became a subject of discussion. Of that Council, several incorrect and unfaithful translations from the Greek, into Latin, had been made and handed about in the west. One of these spurious copies was produced in the Council of Frankfort. In this copy Constantine, a bishop of Cyprus, was wrongfully made to say, "That holy images were to be honored like the blessed Trinity." The fathers of Frankfort were shocked at the assertion, and unanimously rejected it as impious and idolatrous. So far they were right; but they proceeded farther, upon false ground, and became wrong. They falsely

supposed that the Latin copy was a true one, that the translation faithfully expressed the sense of the original, and that the proposition, as it stood in the Latin, had been sanctioned by the Fathers of Nice. On that false supposition they hastily pronounced anathema against them. In passing this precipitate censure, the French bishops seem to have been biased by a work, published about four years before, in the king's name, and are therefore called the Caroline books, a harsh and peevish performance, fraught with prejudice and acrimony against the Greeks. Pope Adrian, foreseeing the serious consequences that were likely to arise from this error of fact in the western prelates, prudently silenced the dispute, by supplying them with the original text of the Council, which says, "Images, indeed, are to be honored, but not with that honor which is paid to the blessed Trinity." In the translated copy, the short but expressive negative, *not*, was either negligently overlooked or maliciously suppressed. Truth being disclosed, the Caroline books sunk into oblivion; the anathema of Frankfort lost its sting.

Charlemagne was now in the zenith of his glory. By the vigor and success of his military exploits, he was master of a greater extent of country than any one prince had possessed in Europe since the fall of the western empire. All the territory that composes modern France, from the ocean to the Rhine, the greatest part of Italy; Spain, from the Pyrenees to the Ebro; Saxony, Thuringia, Franconia, Bavaria, Suabia and Switzerland, were subject to that mighty monarch. Nothing but the imperial diadem was wanting to crown the summit of his earthly grandeur; and this he obtained in a fourth visit that he made to St. Peter's shrine. On Christmas day, in the last year of the eighth century, while he stood in a bending posture at his prayers, before the high altar in St. Peter's Church, Pope Leo III.,

the successor of Adrian, set an imperial crown upon his head; loud acclamations were that instant echoed through the sacred dome, "Long life to Charles, the most pious Augustus, the great and pacific emperor of the Romans." Leo, according to the ancient manner under the Cæsars, prostrated before the new emperor, and acknowledged his civil sovereignty over the western empire; then rising up, he gave him the royal unction, and mass was celebrated. This memorable transaction passed at Rome without the participation of Irene, the reigning empress of Constantinople; but Nicephorus, her successor, formally assented to it, and acknowledged Charlemagne for the imperial sovereign of the west. From that time a boundary was fixed, and a line of separation drawn between the Greek and Roman territory; from this restoration of the western empire, Europe dates a new æra.

In this revolution of sovereign power, the seeds of which were sown by the savage hand of Leo, the Isaurian, the Greeks accuse the two Gregories, the second and the third, as the instigators of rebellion, and disposers of temporal dominion. The short but candid account we have given of what passed during the pontificate of those two holy popes, shows the charge to be unfounded. Mr. Gibbon* has betrayed a strong inclination to make his readers believe that the accusation is just. But so little consistent with itself is the narrative he gives, that he thereby destroys his own design. He tells us, and he tells us truth, that the pontiff, in his letters to the emperor Leo, marks the limits of the ecclesiastical and civil powers, confining the first to spiritual matters only, the latter to civil concerns, and that while he reminded the Italians of their religious duties, he exhorted them not to separate from the body of the Roman monarchy. "These moderate counsels," says that florid writer,

* Vol. v, c. 40.

“delayed and prevented the election of a new emperor; and, till the coronation of Charlemagne, the government of Rome and Italy was exercised in the name of the successors of Constantine.” The historical fact then is simply this: the tyrannical conduct of Leo, the Isaurian, drove the Roman people to revolt; and the Roman people voted the imperial crown to Charlemagne in return for the protection he had afforded them against their oppressors.

The eighth century furnishes no number of ecclesiastical writers; not more than two of any note appear. St. John Damascen, and Venerable Bede; the first born at Damascus in Syria, the latter in Northumberland in England. St. John, for some time, held a considerable office under the Caliph, then made himself a monk in the monastery of St. Sabas, near Jerusalem, where he composed an excellent treatise upon the orthodox faith, besides several other works, amongst which is an elaborate defence of holy images. Venerable Bede was born before the middle of the foregoing century, was educated in the monastery of Saints Peter and Paul, in York, where he took the religious habit, and stretched out life till the year 734, of the eighth century. when he died at the age of ninety. His writings, on various subjects, fill eight volumes in folio, comprising his valuable History of the English Church, as far as the year 731.

CENTURY IX.

SECTION I.

Death of Charlemagne.

(A. D. 814.) CHARLEMAGNE employed the fourteen last years of his life in promoting literary knowledge, morality and religion among his subjects. Learning and the study of the arts had fallen into general neglect in France. That they might recover their former lustre, the enlightened monarch erected public schools, enacted wholesome laws for the support of ecclesiastical discipline, gave flattering encouragements to industry and talents, and from foreign countries invited to his court men of learning, among whom was the celebrated Alcuin, from England, a clergyman of deep science and exemplary piety. Charlemagne, from the time of his coronation at Rome, was possessed both of the imperial crown and the royal crown of France; the first was elective, the second hereditary. At the age of seventy-one, when life became every day more and more precarious, he judged it prudent to take such measures, before he died, as should secure them both to his only surviving son, Lewis, surnamed Le Debonnaire, or the Meek. His two eldest sons, Charles and Pepin, the first of whom had been crowned king of Germany, and the other king of Italy, were dead without lawful issue. He therefore sent to let Lewis know, that he must come to him, at Aix-la-Chapelle, in order to settle a matter of the utmost importance to them both. He summoned a numerous assembly of bishops, abbots, dukes, and noble Franks, to meet him at the same time. It was in

the month of November, 813. He called them all before him, exhorted them to bear true allegiance to his son, Lewis; mentioned the thought he had of conferring on him the title of emperor, and of making him his associate in the empire, and concluded by asking if it had their approbation. They unanimously exclaimed, that the thought came from God. On the following Sunday he went in state, accompanied by his prelates and nobles, to the great Church, clothed in his imperial robes, with the crown upon his head; he advanced with his son by his side to the altar, upon which he had ordered a crown to be placed. After praying for some time, he first addressed the spectators, then bade his son take the crown from the altar, and put it on his head, meaning thereby to show him, that he held the empire from God alone. The sacred vaults instantly resounded with, Long life to the emperor Lewis. Mass was then said, after which the two emperors returned to the palace. They joyfully passed a few days together, then taking an affectionate, and, as they foresaw, the last farewell of each other, Lewis returned into Aquitain, of which he was king.

The old emperor remained at Aix-la-Chapelle, where he died on the following January, 814. He was seized with a fever as he came out of the bath. It continued to increase, and in the space of a fortnight brought his life into danger. Being admonished of his situation, he devoutly prepared for death, by prayer, and all the spiritual helps, which the Catholic Church affords to her dying children. Having received extreme unction and the holy eucharist, he patiently waited his final dissolution with a perfect resignation to the divine will. In his last moments he made the sign of the cross upon his forehead and his breast, and piously pronouncing the words, "Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," he placidly expired, in the fourteenth year of his reign.

emperor, the forty-fifth as king of France, and the seventy-second of his age.

The French writers seem to vie with each other in their profuse encomiums of Charlemagne, whom, for piety and military glory, they equal to Theodosius and Constantine. On these three Christian emperors the appellation of Great is equally bestowed; and, certainly, if success in the field and the acquisition of empire, if the boldness of enterprise and vigor of execution, if dignity of action and respect from foreign nations challenge any distinctive title to pre-eminence in the class of kings, Charlemagne may justly claim the honorable distinction. His liberal alms to the distressed Christians in Syria, in Egypt, and Africa, his magnificent donations to the holy See, his zeal for religion, and the encouragement he gave to learning throughout his dominions, form the brilliant outlines of his Christian character. The glow of these public virtues has dazzled the eye of some of his admirers, has made them blind, and even partial to some of his defects. Charlemagne, with all the splendid show of Christian devotion, had his criminal attachments; he had his darling weaknesses and private vices, which his most devoted encomiasts cannot dissemble.* The lubricious irregularities of his daughters, which, from a false fondness, he either favored or connived at, his own conjugal infidelities, his whimsical divorces, his simultaneous plurality of wives, his multiplicity of concubines, and spurious offspring, have left a blot in his moral character which no high-colored varnish of panegyric ever can obliterate. In the boundless mercy of God, we trust that his many good qualities drew down upon him in the end the grace of true repentance. Paschal, an antipope, in the year 1161, inserted his name in the Roman calendar, and

* See Eignard.

Aix-la-Chapelle honors him as a saint ; but the holy See has not yet discovered, either in his piety or his penitence, those genuine marks of an exalted virtue, which it requires to set him up as a public model for the edification and imitation of the faithful. At Metz, he is considered as a sinner, standing in need of purgation, and annual mass is said for the repose of his soul. Could pecuniary considerations or interest purchase, at the Vatican, a rank or title among the saints, as some are heard to say, Constantine, Pepin, and Charlemagne would have long since held a conspicuous place. But of that honor the price is sanctity alone, and virtue publicly displayed in a super-eminent degree.

SECTION II.

Egbert, sole Monarch of England.

(A. D. 828.) WHILE Charlemagne, by military achievements, extended his dominions to the enormous magnitude we have seen upon the Continent, Egbert, by his policy more than by force of arms, united the whole strength of England into one monarchy. The Saxon heptarchy, in Great Britain, had been gradually formed by a succession of conquests over the ancient inhabitants of the island. When the first warmth of national attachment was cooled by the erection of separate interests among the conquerors, the flames of discord frequently broke out between two rival states, and consumed by slow degrees the sickly frame of those puny kingdoms. An hereditary right to the crown had either not been acknowledged or not strictly observed in all the kingdoms of the heptarchy. Hence the reigning

prince had oftentimes as many rivals of his throne to guard against, as there were princes of the blood. Many of the Saxon kings, though married, left no issue, and many resigned their crowns to embrace a monastic life. Hence a competitorship for regal power arose, not only among the distant branches of royalty, but among the families of Saxon nobility. In these ambitious struggles, which the pacific principles of the gospel could not hinder, the aid of a neighboring state was often sought and obtained. The chance of war turned the balance of power sometimes to one kingdom, and sometimes to another. Kent, Northumberland, Mercia, and Wessex had their day. In these four kingdoms the other three were absorbed, when Egbert mounted the throne of Wessex, in the year 800.

Egbert was descended in a direct line from Cerdic, the founder of that kingdom. Hereditary right, as far as it went, gave him a just claim to the crown. But Brithric, a more remote descendant of the royal stock, had obtained possession. The jealousy of this prince rendered it unsafe for Egbert to remain within the realm: he secretly withdrew into France, where he was well received by Charlemagne. By living in the court, and serving in the armies of that monarch, he acquired that knowledge and experience, which fitted him for the conquest of his own country. Upon the death of Brithric, the unanimous voice of the West-Saxon nobility called him home to assume the government of his hereditary dominions. The activity and vigor of his genius prompted him to extend his boundary; he extended it to the land's end, by the reduction of Cornwall. The rash ambition of Bernulf, king of Mercia, furnished him a more plausible pretext of attempting other conquests. Bernulf, by the advantages he had gained over the neighboring princes, seemed to be in a fair way of giving laws

to the whole island; he invaded Wessex, where he found, in king Egbert, his equal in ambition, and his superior in military abilities. Egbert encountered and slew him in the field of battle. Then marching his victorious troops into the very heart of Mercia, and meeting with no resistance from a disheartened and divided people, he subjected the whole midland kingdom to his obedience. Kent soon after willingly consented to resign its independence rather than risk the chance of war. Egbert now saw the whole heptarchy at his feet, except the north, which he knew was ready to submit at the first appearance of an army coming against it. The Northumbrians, in fact, were weakened by intestine divisions; they had no government on which they could rely; they no sooner heard of the conqueror's approach but they sent deputies to receive him as their sovereign, without a struggle. Thus, within the space of four years, Egbert, the successful monarch of the west, made himself master of the whole Saxon heptarchy, which, by public edict, he incorporated into one great state, and ordered to be called England. This event takes its date from the year 828.

SECTION III.

State of Religion under the Heptarchy.

(A. D. 828.) THE time, from king Ethelbert's conversion to the final dissolution of the heptarchy, includes a period of about two hundred and thirty years. During that period religion shone with primitive splendor in the practice of all Christian virtues. In the history of those times, as well as in that of the apostolic age, although we meet with scandals and heinous sins of some individuals, the natural effects of human frailty, yet the spirit which pervaded all ranks of men, and animated the body of the people, was truly Christian. What zeal in the divine service, what emulation in promoting God's honor, and what hearty devotion, as Mr. Echard relates,* possessed the English nation in those days, we may gather from the numerous churches magnificently endowed, and the religious houses then founded. These houses were the nurseries of virtue, the seminaries of learning, and the schools of industry. There, day and night, the sacred arches rung with the praises of their great Creator; there, sequestered from the cares of worldly pursuits, religious men and women solely devoted themselves to the attainment of that end for which they were solely made; there the most perfect virtues were taught and learned by word and example. Prayer, study, and manual exercise employed the time of the religious monk. The learned and correct author of the preface to the *Monasticon* testifies, that within two hundred years, no less than thirty English Saxon kings and queens resigned their crowns, and renounced the world to secure their salvation by the pious practices of a monastic life.

* *Hist. Eng.* vol. i, c. 3.

To men unacquainted with the evangelical counsels of perfection, such a choice may appear no better than folly. In that light the whole gospel appeared to the uninstructed Gentiles: Men who consider themselves as placed in this world only to enjoy it, or who so act and live as if they thought themselves made for no better enjoyments hereafter, seem ever ready to lavish their abuse on whatever contradicts their carnal notions of spiritual things. "For the sensual man," as St. Paul assures us,* "perceiveth not those things which are of the Spirit of God: for to him they are folly, and he cannot understand." Mr. Hume, whose knowledge of religion was certainly not very extensive nor correct, has given an account† of the English Saxon Church under the heptarchy, solely calculated to beguile instead of informing his readers. Guided more by deistical fancies of his own imagination, than by the records of historical truth, he confidently asserts, "that the priests in the heptarchy, after the first missionaries, were wholly Saxon, and almost as ignorant and barbarous as the laity; that they received their doctrine through the corrupt channels of Rome with a mixture of credulity and superstition equally destructive to the understanding and to morals; that their reverence for saints seems to have supplanted the adoration of the Supreme Being; that monastic observances were esteemed more meritorious than the active virtues; that bounty to the church atoned for all violence against society; that remorse for the more robust vices was appeased not only by amendment of life, but by penances, by servility to the Monks, and abject devotion; that a superstitious attachment to Rome, and a gradual subjection of the kingdom to a foreign jurisdiction, disgraced the religion of the Saxons; that the Britons had never acknowledged any subordination to the Roman pontiff, but that Wilfrid, bishop of Lindisfarne, the

* 1 Cor. c. ii. v. 13.

† Vol. 1. a. 1.

haughtiest and most luxurious prelate of his age, gave a finishing stroke to his subjection, by his appeal to Rome against the decisions of an English synod." The positiveness that accompanies these bold assertions is aptly employed to give them the air of truth to such of his readers, as are not sufficiently informed to know they are false. The better to impose, the respectable name of Bede is quoted in the Scottish margin, as if Bede could be a voucher for those impudent assertions, which his faithful history of those times flatly contradicts. Let the sincere friend of truth consult that venerable and learned author, who lived full ninety years under the heptarchy, and with his own eyes he will see how shamefully the English Saxon Church is traduced by the unfaithful pen of Mr. Hume. The opprobrious terms, of corrupt doctrines of Rome, of ignorance, of superstition, and abject devotion, are but the echo of Knox's and John Calvin's cant, incessantly repeated to villify the gospel councils of Christian perfection, and to discredit the religious practices of Christ's universal Church.

The English Saxon Church, during its infancy, stood in need of foreign aid for the sacred ministry, till schools and seminaries for learning could be formed at home. That foreign aid was necessarily required and received for some years after St. Austin's time, witness St. Theodore, the sixth Archbishop of Canterbury, with his learned friend Adrian; witness Agilbert, Felix, Birinus, and others, who were not Saxons, nor amongst the first missionaries. Many of the English youth went abroad to study in foreign schools, from whence they returned, completely qualified with virtue and learning, to instruct their countrymen. Among these were St. Wilfrid and St. Benet Biscop. But when schools were opened in the island, and they were opened at an early

period under foreign masters, learning made a rapid progress among the English Saxons. It is recorded, that in St. Theodore's school at Canterbury, the students spoke the Greek and Latin languages as fluently as their own. The great monasteries had their public schools, in which the youth of the nobility and young ecclesiastics were trained up. Each monastery had its library, and the usual occupation of many of the Monks during the hours allotted to manual labor, was in transcribing books, or in compiling registers and Saxon annals; Florence of Worcester, and William of Malmesbury, composed their histories. Venerable Bede himself is a shining example of the application and attention paid to study in those schools. In a letter to Eggbright, bishop of York, he advises that prelate to be careful in placing through his extensive diocese virtuous and learned priests for the instruction of his flock. Nugatory was the advice, if no such priests existed in the land. His history teems with names of English Saxons, whom he highly extolls, some for their learning and eminent knowledge of the holy scriptures, some for their sublime sanctity and gift of miracles. The accomplished Alcuin, deacon of York, is an ornament to his own country as well as to France, in tracing and directing the plans of Charlemagne for the revival of Letters among the Franks. To the abilities, to the zeal, and apostolical labors of a Willibrord, of a Boniface, of a Lullus, of a Willchad, and other holy missionaries from the English Saxon schools, Friseland, the Netherlands, Saxony, Bavaria, and almost all the north of Germany, were principally indebted for their conversion to the Christian faith. Amongst all these bright characters, can Mr. Hume discover none but barbarous and ignorant priests? He certainly disgraces himself, and insults his readers, when he tells them so.

He has singled out St. Wilfrid, the learned and virtuous bishop, not of Lindisfarne, but of York, for the object of his peevish spleen and slanderous abuse. The bishop's appeal to Rome, against an unjust sentence, was alone sufficient to make him criminal in that historian's eye: but, could it make him *the haughtiest and most luxurious prelate of his age*, in that historian's eye? Venerable Bede and Stephani Eddi, both cotemporaries and eye-witnesses of his conduct, speak very differently of him; the character they gave him is that of a pious, moderate, and persecuted man. His humble and silent retreat for three years in the monastery of Rippon, while his episcopal See of York was unjustly held from him, his active zeal in the discharge of his pastoral duties, the expenditure of his income in charitable and pious uses, his irreproachable conduct of life, acknowledged even by his adversaries, his apostolical labors, in fine, among the Mercians, the South Saxons, and in Friseland, show no marks either of the haughty or luxurious prelate. To form a right judgment of his appeal to Rome, we must state the circumstances. Egfrid, king of the Northumbrians, thought himself injured by the prelate's advice to St. Audry, and vowed revenge. With this view he divided the diocese of York into two, between the two new bishops of his own appointment, and turned St. Wilfrid entirely out. Then, as a cover to his injustice, he importuned the primate Theodore to sanction what he had done. The infirm Theodore, at the age of eighty, being imposed upon by plausible appearances, after much persuasion ratified the partition of York diocese, by a formal sentence of the archi-episcopal court. From that sentence Wilfrid modestly appealed to Rome, where the cause was impartially discussed, and decided in his favor. The venerable Theodore then saw he had been deceived, humbly confessed his fault, and made every reparation in

his power to the injured bishop of York. On the renewal of a similar injustice afterwards, St. Wilfrid appealed a second time, and a second time obtained redress. The pen of malevolence, as we observe, wrongfully attributes the appellant's success at Rome not to the justice of his cause, but to the flattered pride of an ambitious pontiff. An appeal to Rome from the oppressive sentence of an inferior court, in a matter purely ecclesiastical, was neither inordinate nor new. It was sanctioned by antiquity and the canons of the church. The illustrious St. Athanasius of Alexandria, and St. John Chrysostom of Constantinople, appealed in similar circumstances, the first to Julius, the second to Innocent, bishops of Rome; and yet those patriarchal churches were as tenacious, and jealous of their privileges, as the English Saxon or the British churches ever could be. The spiritual supremacy of St. Peter's chair has been established* by the divine founder of our religion; it is and always was an indispensable article of Catholic communion. To say the Britons never acknowledged any subordination to the Roman Pontiff, is to declare them schismatics at once; it is to assert what cannot be proved; for the assertion is not true. The names of a St. Dubritius, a St. David, and of numerous old British saints, inserted in the Roman martyrology, evince its falsity. In the register of her saints, Rome enters none who acknowledge not the supremacy of her spiritual jurisdiction.

* John, c. xxi. v. 16, 17.

SECTION VI.

View of the English Saxon Church.

(A. D. 828.) JUSTICE to the memory of our religious ancestors, so rudely insulted and traduced by Mr. Hume and other writers of the same stamp, induces me to dwell a little longer on the flourishing state of the English Saxon Church during the heptarchy. So fraught with examples of the purest virtue are the old Saxon records, that they powerfully incline us to believe the heptarchy to have been the most auspicious reign for religion that England ever saw. The religious foundations, scattered through the land, are public monuments of that active piety, which animated the wealthy part of the faithful to promote the service of God, and the salvation of souls. The numerous list of saints, who compose the English Saxon calendar, authentically vouches for the eminent virtues which then flourished within those consecrated seats of evangelical perfection. There, for the benefit of the rising generation, the principles of probity and true religion were instilled into the minds of youth, and the elements of sacred and profane literature were imbibed and perfected. The mode of education there adopted, we readily allow, gave not that polish to the manners, nor that elegance to the art of speaking and writing well, nor that relish, in fine, for the speculative sciences, which we see in the present age, but it formed such men as determined Charlemagne to adopt the same institutions in France. It left the students neither ignorant nor barbarous, as Mr. Hume pretends. The English Saxon nation was not slow to profit by the lessons she received from her first foreign masters; she quickly began to cultivate and display her own natural talents. The study of the Greek and Latin

tongue, the study of grammar, of poetry, and of the arts, exercised the genius of her youth; to the practice of religion, she added the knowledge of the holy scriptures, of ecclesiastical history, of the fathers and canons of the church. Hence a bright succession of qualified men, whom Alcuin, in a letter to Charlemagne, calls the flowers of England, constantly supplied the schools with good masters, and the church with proper ministers. Amidst these flowers of Alcuin, we distinguish Alcuin himself, an Adelmus, an Egbert, a Tatwin, a Bede, not to mention many others, whom the Saxon chronicle commends for their superior piety and learning. With great feeling Alcuin commemorates the abilities, the learning, and valuable library of his former master, Egbert, the disciple of Bede.

Egbert, here mentioned, was brother to the king of the Northumbrians; he was a scholar, well versed in the liberal arts, and for his talents had been promoted to the episcopal See of York. York, from the time of Paulinus, to the year 735, had lost its archiepiscopal title. The first regulation made in favor of that See by St. Gregory I., had been either recalled, or never fully executed. St. Gregory III. renewed the ancient title at the solicitation of Egbert, to whom he sent the pall, with a grant of archiepiscopal jurisdiction. Lest the grant of this privilege to the See of York might give umbrage to Tatwin, the metropolitan of Canterbury, the same Pope confirmed all the ancient prerogatives of this first See to him and his successors for ever, as Primate of England. But among the men of science, who lived under the heptarchy, venerable Bede holds the first place. Camden calls him "The singular and shining light," Leland, "The chiefest and brightest ornament of the English nation, most worthy, if any one ever was, of immortal fame."

Melancton* acknowledges him to have been singularly skilled in Greek and Latin, in mathematics, philosophy, and sacred literature. Bishop Tanner calls him "a prodigy of learning in an unlearned age;" he then adds, "when we take a view of all his writings together, we shall confess that he alone is a library and a treasure of all the arts." Mr. Cave thinks it a disgrace to our nation, that no accurate or complete edition of Bede's works has been set forth. After such encomiums, impartially given by protestant writers, how has it happened, that the discerning Mr. Hume should so far overlook this shining light, this brightest ornament of the English nation, this prodigy of learning, this treasure of the arts, as to leave him with the clerical crowd under the degrading imputation of ignorance and barbarism, which he peremptorily stamps upon the whole body of English Saxon clergy, without exception, without mercy, and without justice.

The doctrine, taught by Bede, the venerable doctor of the English Saxon church, the doctrines of the mass, of the real presence, of praying for the dead, of the invocation of saints, of respect for their relics and holy images, doctrines confirmed by miracles even within the reach of his own knowledge, too apparently clash with the ideas of a false philosophy to escape the abuse of Mr. Hume. This writer expresses his supercilious contempt of them; he pronounces them to be the corrupt doctrines of Rome. Of Rome indeed they are undoubted doctrines, pure and incorrupt as the spring from whence they flow. If the historian, whose principal object should be truth, had taken pains to consult the genuine sources of information, before he pronounced an Ignatius, the disciple of St. John, the Apostle and Evangelist, an Irenæus, a Tertullian, an Origen, a Cyprian, an

* De corr. studiis.

Athanasius, an Ambrose, an Austin, and the whole list of Fathers, as Luther honestly confesses, would have informed him that those doctrines were the pure, primitive doctrines and practice of Christ's universal Church in Asia, in Africa, and Europe. Conscious of the obligations which they owed to Rome for their conversion to the true faith, our Saxon ancestors entertained more generous and more grateful sentiments. Numbers of devout pilgrims in those days repaired to Rome with no other view than to pay their homage of gratitude to God upon the threshold of St. Peter. Among these we distinguish Inas, the good king of Wessex, who, after a prosperous reign of thirty-two years, abdicated his crown for the love of God, travelled to Rome, and there became a monk in the year 727. Before his abdication, he imposed an annual tribute of a penny upon every dwelling house in his kingdom, to be paid to Rome, as a public acknowledgement of his devotion and respect for the apostolic See, from which he and his people had received the faith of Christ. This eleemosynary tribute, commonly called Rome-scot or Peterpence, was employed by the Pope, in founding a school at Rome for the reception and maintenance of English students and pilgrims. Its institution, first set on foot by Inas, for Wessex only, in 726; was next adopted by Offa, for the kingdom of Mercia, in 794; and lastly, by king Edgar, for all England, in 964. The mode of collecting and of paying this eleemosynary tribute, was finally settled by a law of the realm, and regularly executed from that time to the schism of Henry VIII.

SECTION V.

Progress of Religion in the North.

(A. D. 820.) THE enterprising and victorious Charlemagne completely finished what his father Pepin had begun, by adding to his empire all the territory that lies between the Rhine and the Elbe. St. Willehad preached the gospel to the Saxons before their subjugation to the French monarchy, but had not met with all the success which his zeal deserved. Those uncivilized idolaters were too impatient of restraint to be governed by principle; they often abandoned the faith which they had embraced with seeming sincerity, and returned to their old disorderly habits. Till their native prince professed himself a Christian, religion obtained no solid footing amongst them. But when their prince had once set the example, the people appeared eager to follow it, the worship of idols ceased, and in the compass of a few years, all Saxony submitted to the yoke of Christ. To quicken the propagation of the gospel, and to secure its preservation in those northern provinces of Germany, the religious Charlemagne founded the bishoprics of Verden, and Minden, of Bremen, of Osnaburg, Paderborn, and Munster. From Saxony, the light of religion spread along the shore of the Baltic, and diffused its rays upon the inhospitable coasts of Denmark and Sweden.

Harold, king of Denmark, being driven from his throne and country by his rebel subjects, in the year 814, took refuge in the imperial court of Lewis le Debonnaire. There he received not only royal hospitality, but salutary instruction, and became a Christian. He made several attempts to regain his crown, but as they all proved

abortive, the emperor bestowed upon him for his present residence, the county of Riustri, in Friseland, where, from the vicinity of the two countries, he might more easily watch and seize the most favorable opportunity of recovering his kingdom. Harold took with him a zealous and holy Monk, by name Anscarius. Anscarius was a Frenchman, had received a virtuous and learned education in the old abbey of Corbie, upon the Somme, in Picardy, where he took the monastic habit, and, at the recommendation of the emperor, was sent by his superiors to accompany king Harold, and to preach the gospel to the rude inhabitants of Denmark. Aubert, a Monk of the same community, went along with him. These two missionaries had the merit of carrying the first tidings of Christianity to the Danes; their labors were not crowned with any distinguished success; for though many were converted and baptised, Denmark was still to be considered as an infidel nation.

In the interim, a solemn deputation from the nobles of Sweden arrived in France, requesting missionaries to instruct them in the Christian faith. St. Anscarius, who still remained with king Harold, was recalled by his abbot, and proposed for the mission of Sweden. The apostolic man readily consented, embarked with Vitmar, a Monk of Corbie, crossed the Baltic, and landed at Biore, the capital city of the country at that time, near the spot where Stockholm now stands. The king gave him a gracious reception, and ample leave to announce the word of salvation to his subjects. Herigarius, the governor of the city, was among the first of many who demanded and received baptism. The stay of Anscarius was too short for religion to make any considerable progress in the country. A door, however, was opened for others to enter

that mission; the seeds of Christianity were sown, but the time for their producing a plentiful harvest was not yet come. At the end of six months, Anscarius, with Vitnar, his associate, left the country, and returned to France. The good emperor expressed much satisfaction at the account Anscarius gave him of what he had done, and immediately concerted measures which were thought best to strengthen and support those infant churches of the north. The erection of an archiepiscopal See at Hamburgh was proposed and adopted. Anscarius set off with letters of recommendation from the emperor, to obtain the confirmation of it from the Pope, who was Gregory IV. Having obtained from his Holiness all he asked, he was consecrated the first archbishop of Hamburgh, with the title of legate of the holy See for all the north. In the cultivation of that ungrateful vineyard, the holy prelate labored with indefatigable zeal for five and thirty years, during all which time he had great hardships to undergo, and little fruit to reap. Venerable for sanctity, and endowed with the gift of miracles, he died at Bremen in 865.

SECTION VI.

State of Religion in the Western Empire.

(A. D. 840.) THE emperor Lewis, who, on account of his forgiving temper, acquired the surname of Le Debonnaire, by solemn deed confirmed the donations of his father and grandfather, to the holy See, and, in addition to them, granted likewise the whole dutchy of Rome, and some other territories. But in the grant he made this remarkable

reserve, that the supreme jurisdiction of deciding in civil matters for the city any duty of Rome should remain vested in him and his successors. The deed was signed by himself and his three sons, Lothaire, Pepin, and Lewis, in a national assembly held at Aix-la-Chapelle. By another act, made at the same time, he gave the title of emperor to his eldest son Lothaire; created Pepin, his second son, king of Aquitain; and Lewis, king of Bavaria. After that, he turned his thoughts upon the means of promoting religion and true piety among his subjects. The concurrence of his bishops was here necessary; nor were they slow in seconding his intentions. They frequently assembled to review the state of religion in France, enforced the old, and enacted new regulations for the correction of abuses, and better observance of ecclesiastical discipline. The irregularities which had crept into the Benedictine order, engaged their particular attention.

The disciples of St. Benet, in France, had by degrees fallen from the spirit and primitive practice of their rule. Some understood it in one sense, and some in another; from that difference of understanding and interpreting the text, according to fancy, different modes of following it were introduced into the different houses of the same order. Hence arose a confusion of discipline, disunion, and discord among the Monks, who in their customs appeared strangers to each other, though professed followers of the same common rule. The emperor summoned the principal abbots of the order within his dominions to attend him at Aix-la-Chapelle, his usual place of residence. All being assembled, the original rule of St. Benet was publicly read, its true meaning thoroughly discussed and ascertained, the religious legislator's intention explained at full length, every future misconception of his plan carefully guarded against, and an

uniformity of domestic discipline through the whole order religiously commanded. Lewis, after that, extended his care to the reparation of all injustice, committed in his own and the foregoing reign. By long abuse, the civil power, in many instances, had usurped a control over the election of bishops, which, according to the ancient canons, ought to be left to the free suffrages of the clergy and people.

In a parliament, held at Attigni, in 822, Lewis restored the ancient freedom of episcopal elections. For the episcopacy, as Florus, a learned deacon of Lyons, justly observes, is not a gratuity of men, but a gift of the Holy Ghost. The powers of episcopal ordination issue not from any royal grant, but from divine institution, and are exercised with the free consent and authority of the Church. If by a change of discipline, canonically established, the prince is authorised to nominate to the vacant bishoprics within his dominions, it is a regulation of mere prudence, adopted to prevent dissensions, and to preserve harmony and a right understanding between the two powers: it is not done nor admitted as a requisite condition for a valid and canonical ordination.

Lewis, after the decease of his first wife, married Judith, of Bavaria, the source of much civil and domestic strife. She bore him a son, known by the name of Charles the Bald, to whom, at her solicitation, he gave the title of king of Germany. The three princes of his former marriage were highly irritated, and flew into open rebellion to revenge what they deemed an insult upon their own dignity: a civil war commenced in the very centre of the empire. Lothaire, the most active of the three brothers, had the address to make the world believe that his cause was just; his arms were also crowned with success. Superior in number, and

valor of his troops, he compelled his father to quit the field, and to retire for safety with his queen into a monastery, while he took upon himself the exclusive title and authority of emperor. A diet of the empire met soon after at Nimeguen, and re-instated Lewis, in 831. An apparent reconciliation passed between the father and his sons; he sincerely forgave them, but they, who had done the wrong, could not so easily forgive or forget. Two years scarce elapsed, when they again revolted; both parties resorted again to arms. The imperial troops were bribed by Lothaire, they abandoned their sovereign in the field, and basely suffered him to be carried off a prisoner by his unnatural sons. He was conducted to Soissons, led before the altar in the great Church, with a paper in his hand, containing various crimes laid to his charge, and compelled to express his sorrow for them. He was then solemnly deposed, under the pretence of being put into a state of canonical penance, and sentenced to be shut up in the monastery of St. Medard. During his confinement the brothers quarrelled among themselves; Pepin and Lewis insisted upon his being released from prison, and restored to his throne, which was done at the end of two years. Ebbon, the arch-bishop of Rheims, acted a principal part in these infamous transactions, for which he was afterwards degraded by an episcopal sentence. The meek emperor reigned five years after his restoration, and at his death, left his eldest son, Lothaire, sole emperor and king of Italy, and his youngest son, Charles, king of France.

Lothaire had never been in friendship with his brothers from the time of his father's restoration. His spleen now burst forth into open acts of hostility against Lewis and Charles. Loss and disgrace attended his arms. Being worsted in two bloody battles, he was forced to make peace.

when he no longer had the power of continuing the war. Touched at last with remorse, or disgusted with royalty, he put on a Monk's habit in the monastery of Prum, and died six days after, in 855. His eldest son, Lewis, inherited the kingdom of Italy, with the title of emperor. This young prince had to fight against the African Moors, who made a descent upon the Italian shore in great force, and spread desolation through the country. Dying without issue, in 875, he left his titles and estates to be inherited by his uncle, Charles the Bald, king of France. Charles repaired immediately to Rome, and was crowned emperor in St. Peter's Church by Pope John VIII.

From the death of Leo III., in 816, there was a quick succession of Popes in the following order: Stephen IV., St. Paschal, Eugenius II., Valentinus, Gregory IV., Sergius II., St. Leo IV., Benedict III., St. Nicholas, Adrian II., John VIII.

SECTION VII.

Extinction of Iconoclasm.

(A. D. 842.) By the decisions of the seventh general Council held at Nice, as we have seen, Iconoclasm received a deadly wound, but did not immediately expire. Among the fickle Greeks, it was no unusual thing to see an heterodox system rise and sink, and then emerge again, as an emperor might chance to choose. At Constantinople the imperial crown was as much become the prize of faction as ever it was in ancient Rome. The young emperor, Constantine, now grown to man's estate, and weary of maternal

control, took the reins of government in his own hands, stripped Irene of all her authority, and ran headlong into vice. He was married to a princess called Mary, but being deeply enamored with Theodota, one of her maids of honor, he applied to Tarasius, the patriarch, for a divorce. Tarasius replied, that it was not in his power to dissolve a lawful marriage, and that he would sooner die than countenance so unjustifiable an act. Constantine then, despairing of being ever able to carry his point with the sanction of the church, set aside all respect for common decency and religion, forced his lawful wife into a convent, and publicly espoused Theodota in 795. This shameful defiance of the divine law lost him the respect and affection of his subjects. Irene, who had still her eye upon the throne, encouraged their discontents, and having gained the officers of the crown, contrived to have the emperor seized and imprisoned. Then, as if ambition had banished from her heart every female delicacy and maternal feeling for a son, she gave an order for his eyes to be plucked out, which was done with such violence that he died of it, in 797. Irene mounted the throne, which she enjoyed for near five years, when an ungrateful hand retaliated upon her with similar injustice, though less bloody. The great treasurer, Nicephorus, suddenly snatched the crown from the head of his benefactress, to place it upon his own, arrested her person, and sent her into the Isle of Lesbos; where, by hard necessity, she was obliged to spin for her bread. She died the year after, 803.

Nicephorus, whose character was an odious composition of hypocrisy, ingratitude, and avarice, finished an ignoble reign of nine years by being slain in battle against the Bulgarians. His son and successor, Stauracius, reigned not three months, when Michael, who had married his sister,

was called by the public voice to take the command of the empire.

Michael was a meek and religious prince. His first concern was to compose the disagreement, that divided the Catholics, on the subject of Constantine's marriage with Theodota. Men of respectable characters appeared on both sides of the question. The venerable abbots St. Plato and St. Theodore, with their Monks on one side, on the opposite the patriarch Tarasius and his successor, St. Nicephorus, with their clergy. All agreed that the marriage was unlawful, but they disagreed about the manner of treating the imperial sinner. The abbots pronounced sentence of excommunication against him for bigamy, and quarrelled with the patriarchs for not inflicting the same censure. The patriarchs prudently adopted the advice of St. Austin, who contends that extreme severity is not to be exerted against men in power, unless there is a prospect of good arising from it. Tarasius saw he had to deal with an unprincipled emperor, who had the power of doing much mischief to religion, and who actually threatened to call forth the Iconoclasts, of whom there were great numbers in Constantinople; under those circumstances he had every reason to judge, that extreme rigor would serve to exasperate rather than to correct, to occasion much harm and no good, so he wisely concluded to remain silent. St. Nicephorus followed his example. Michael had the satisfaction of reconciling the two parties, who meant equally well to the service of religion. He reigned not two years, when he spontaneously abdicated the crown, and entered into a monastery with his two sons, Theophilact and Nicetas, in 813.

Upon the abdication of Michael, the army raised Leo, the Armenian, from the government of Nataka, to the

throne. In that troubled state of the empire, Leo judged it not safe to trust his fortune to the army alone. To gain the patriarch's approbation, he professed himself a Catholic, and was solemnly crowned. For the better security of his crown, he removed the late emperor and his two sons into different monasteries in the islands, changing their names, and making the two sons eunuchs. Nicetas, the youngest of them, received the name of Ignatius, and was afterwards patriarch of Constantinople. Leo having nothing to apprehend from any rival of his power, threw off the mask in the second year of his reign, and declared himself an Iconoclast. The impetuosity of his temper impelled him to renew all the outrages of his predecessors, the Isaurian and his son, Copronymus, against the images of Christ and his Saints. He deposed and banished Nicephorus, the patriarch, and in his room substituted one Theodore, his armor-bearer, a creature totally void of learning and virtue. After a tyrannical reign of seven years, he met with an untimely end. His cruelties armed a band of conspirators against his life, at the head of whom was Michael, the Phrygian, surnamed the stammerer, his former friend and benefactor. Leo suspected him, caused him to be apprehended on Christmas Eve, and condemned him to be burnt alive in his presence the next day. The empress interposed, and obtained a reprieve for four and twenty hours. The other conspirators, fearing they were now betrayed, laid hold of the opportunity, rushed into the church, where the unsuspecting emperor was assisting at the solemn service of the day, and slew him in the very sanctuary. By this wonderful turn of fortune, Michael the Phrygian was snatched from a fiery furnace, already kindled to consume him, and without waiting for his fetters to be knocked off, was immediately carried and placed upon the throne.

In principle and morals, Michael was no better than his predecessor. Although an Iconoclast, like him by profession, he began his reign with an act of moderation, and recalled the exiled bishops, the patriarch Nicephorus excepted, whom he left still in banishment. After the death of Theodore, the false patriarch, in 821, he appointed Antony, a notorious Iconoclast, to succeed him, and commenced a bitter persecution against the Catholics. He died in 829, and was succeeded by his son Theophilus.

Theophilus set off with a pompous show of zeal for justice, and even for religion. But the phantom soon vanished, and open war was denounced against the Saints and their images. It was made a crime to honor or to keep them. Scripture paintings and holy images were then torn from the churches to make room for painted birds and wild beasts; they were carried out by loads into the streets, and with insult committed to the flames. Severe punishments were denounced and inflicted upon those who should dare to retain them in their houses: the prisons were consequently filled with Catholic confessors, painters, monks, and bishops. The pious empress, Theodora, had incessant difficulties to encounter, and perilous risks to run, not to abandon the practice of her orthodox belief. During the twelve years of that oppressive reign, the spirit of persecution ever guided the councils and motions of Theophilus, which has rendered his memory odious to the Greeks. An inflammation in his bowels, occasioned by his drinking snow water, reduced him to the grave, in 842. He left a son, Michael III., only five years old, to inherit the crown, under the care and direction of Theodora. This change in government enabled the pious empress to effect, what she had so long desired, the restoration of holy images. The first step taken towards it was the degrading of John, the wicked

patriarch, and prime instigator of all the mischief, that had desolated the Church for the last six years. Methodius, who had distinguished himself by his talents, piety, and sufferings in the late persecutions, was canonically chosen and placed in the patriarchal chair. By his counsels, and the steady conduct of Theodora, a final stop was put to Iconoclasm. On the second Sunday of Lent, a grand procession of the clergy and laity went to the church of St. Sophia. A solemn mass was sung, and the holy images were restored in due form. In memory of so joyful an event, the Greeks style that day the festival of the orthodoxy, and celebrate it with a particular office to the present time.

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SECTION VIII.

Conversion of the Bulgarians.

(A. D. 845.) A contest for empire had for some years been carried on with various success between the Bulgarians and the emperors of Constantinople. By means of the prisoners made on both sides, many of the former imbibed the doctrines of Christianity. Bulgaria is an extensive province of Turkey, in Europe, intersected by the Danube, and bounded on the east by the Euxine sea. It was then governed by an independent king of its own, who, from the natural strength and internal resources of the country, was in sufficient force to maintain a formidable war against the whole power of the eastern empire. The inhabitants were a fierce race of idolaters, hardy and intrepid in the field. Being vanquished in a bloody battle by Theophilus, the late

Greek emperor, they had the confusion to see their sovereign's sister carried away, with many others, prisoner to Constantinople. During her long detention in the imperial city she was instructed in the Christian religion, and embraced it. After the death of Theophilus she returned to her own country. There she took every opportunity of discoursing with the king, her brother, upon the subject of religion, and she spoke so highly of it, that he resolved to profess it, if, upon further information, he should find it such as his sister represented. Divine Providence seems to have blessed his intention in a most singular manner. A fatal pestilence raged through the kingdom. Every day swept off numbers of his subjects to the grave. Full of concern, and despairing of relief from man, the king felt himself strongly moved to invoke the Supreme Being, whom his sister adored. He did so; God heard his prayer, and the mortality ceased. By this miraculous interposition of the divine power, the king's resolution for becoming a Christian was finally fixed; but before he would profess himself one, he desired to be more fully instructed. He communicated his intentions to the pious empress, Theodora, who, at his request, sent him a bishop to instruct and baptise him. He took the name of Michael, in compliment to the young Greek emperor; he was called Bogoris before. The worship of idols then fell into contempt among the Bulgarians; the whole nation in a few years became Christian.

In the year 866, about twenty years after his conversion, the Bulgarian monarch sent his son, with a splendid train of nobles, on a solemn embassy to Rome. The motive of his sending was to acknowledge the supreme Pastor of Christ's Church, to ask a supply of evangelical missionaries, and to consult the holy Father upon certain points of religious discipline. This embassy, from a newly converted nation,

coming at the time when the church of Constantinople seemed to be on the brink of schism, gave singular comfort to the zealous Pope, Nicholas I. His Holiness named two virtuous bishops, Paul of Populonia, in Tuscany, and Formosus of Porto, afterwards Pope, to go and preach the gospel in Bulgaria. Several priests, carrying with them the holy scriptures, and other books of instruction, accompanied the two prelates. They likewise carried the Pope's answer to the consultation of the Bulgarian nation, containing a hundred and six articles. From these articles it appears that the first Greek missionaries in Bulgaria had endeavored to force upon their new converts all the usages of the Greek rite as matters of obligation. Pope Nicholas explained the matter in so satisfactory a manner to the king, that for the time to come, his majesty would not suffer any other missionaries than those from Rome to preach the gospel within his dominions. Unfortunately for the nation, this resolution was not adhered to. Four years after, the Bulgarians consented to adopt the Greek rite under the patriarch of Constantinople, and consequently fell into schism.

The Slavonians and Russians seem to have received the faith about the same time as the Bulgarians. Slavonia is a long and narrow tract of land, lying between the Danube and the Drave. The inhabitants, though governed by a king, were no better than wild savages, uncivilized and unprincipled, without any fixed notion or practice of religion. There were Mussulmen and Jews, who trafficked with them; these pressed them to receive the law of Moses, those with equal earnestness urged the law of Mahomet. The Slavonians rejected both; from some slender intercourse with the Greeks, they rather inclined to Christianity. They despatched deputies to Constantinople, with a request,

that some Christian teacher might be sent amongst them. St. Ignatius, the patriarch, proposed the matter to Constantine, a learned priest, and a native of Thessalonica. Constantine readily accepted the mission, and set off. But before he entered the country, he stopped at Chersonesus, upon the frontier, with a view of making himself master of their language, before he began his instructions. The language spoken by the Slavonians seemed, in many respects, to resemble the Greek, and might be considered as a dialect of that tongue. Constantine reduced it to an alphabet, for it had none before, and thereby formed a regular language, into which he translated the gospel and some other parts of the holy scripture. Pope John VIII., afterwards permitted mass and the divine office to be said in the Slavonian tongue, for reasons given him by St. Methodius, a fellow laborer with Constantine in that mission. God gave a blessing to the zeal of these two apostolical men. In the course of a few years the whole Slavonian nation entered into the bosom of the Roman Catholic Church.

Not long after this, Russia likewise began to be enlightened with the dawn of faith. The Russian monarch having concluded a treaty of peace and friendship with the emperor of Constantineple, consented to receive a bishop from the patriarch Ignatius, for the instruction of his people in the principles of Christianity. But before he allowed the bishop to begin his mission, it is recorded, that he assembled the ancient chiefs of his nation to deliberate with him, whether it would be right to quit the worship of their forefathers. The bishop was permitted to attend. He held a book of the holy scripture in one hand. Being asked what the doctrines were which he came to teach, he showed them the sacred volume, and said the doctrines he had to teach were contained therein. He briefly recounted the

fundamental articles of Christian belief, and then read to them, both from the old and new scripture, some of the most striking miracles which God had wrought in confirmation of the truths that he announced. The preservation of the three young Israelites, amidst the flames of the Babylonian furnace, struck them most; they all exclaimed, "Show us something like to this, and we shall be then convinced that your doctrine is true." It is not fitting to tempt God, replied the bishop; nevertheless, if you promise to believe and to confess his divine omnipotence, say what you wish to see done, and be assured, that in consideration of your faith he will do it. We desire, said they, that the book you hold in your hand may be thrown into the fire, which we will kindle, and if it comes out unburnt, we solemnly promise to become Christians. A large fire was immediately kindled; then the bishop, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, confidently said, Jesus, Son of God, glorify thy holy name in the presence of this people; the book at that instant was thrown into the fire, and there left as long as they chose, which was for some hours. The fire was extinguished; all stood around in the most earnest expectation; the book was produced to public view, and found to be in the state it was when cast into the fire, neither hurt nor sullied by the smoke or flames. The astonished Russians acknowledged the visible hand of God in the miracle, and believed. Many proselytes came forward to be instructed and baptized.

SECTION IX.

Intrusion of Photius.

(A. D. 858.) THE progress of religion towards the northern regions of Europe, afforded some compensation for the losses it was about to suffer in the south. While the good Theodora sat at the helm and governed the empire for her son, Michael III., during his minority, public happiness and right order flourished both in church and state. On the death of St. Methodius, the patriarch, another Saint was canonically called from his religious cell to preside over the church of Constantinople. This was Ignatius, originally called Nicetas, the illustrious son of Michael the first, surnamed Rangebe, whom Leo, the Armenian, for his own greater security in the throne, disposed of in the manner we have related above. The young Ignatius, from the moment he entered the monastery, adopted the spirit, and performed the duties of a religious life, with the same alacrity and zeal as though it had been his own free choice. The divine Spirit, that breathes where it will, infused into his soul such lofty sentiments of virtue, as duly qualified him for the high dignity, to which the hand of Providence now raised him. From the time of his promotion, in 845, to the year 854, he experienced no public contradiction. But a violent storm was now gathering round him. In the imperial court the seeds of evil had for some time begun to show themselves, which the pious empress observed with grief, but with all her care could not prevent. Her son had given early symptoms of a natural propensity to impiety and vice. Bardas, the brother of Theodora, and chief manager of all state affairs, with the title of Cæsar, had his own interested views in encouraging the vicious inclinations of

his nephew. Bardas was a superior genius, endowed with vast abilities, both natural and acquired. In eloquence he surpassed all his contemporaries, was an eminent scholar, and a liberal promoter of learning. But with all those commendable qualities, so destitute was he of every religious and moral principle, that he discarded his lawful wife, and lived in open incest with his daughter-in-law. The scandal was too flagrant for the patriarch to see and be silent. He remonstrated, he exhorted, he rebuked with all patience, and finally refused him communion. Cæsar remained impenitent: wedded to sin, he resolved to ruin the man who charitably sought his greatest good.

Theodora still held the reins of government, the avowed protectress of Ignatius; she was therefore to be removed before he could be hurt. The young emperor, Michael, surnamed the Drunkard, had now attained the seventeenth year of his age, dissolute in manners, and impious in habit. One of his favorite diversions was to dress up a troop of comedians, the companions of his idle hours, to personate with them the most respectable bishops of the empire, and to ridicule the most solemn ceremonies of our holy religion. Bardas, by flattering his passions, had gained an entire ascendancy over him, and could easily persuade him into every measure he desired. He represented to him that he was now of an age to reign alone, that to remain longer under a woman's control was a disgrace to his imperial rank, and that it was more fitting for his mother to retire to a monastery, than to command in the palace. The ungracious Michael gladly listened to a proposal which at once gratified his vanity, and set him free to indulge his vicious inclinations as he pleased, without check.

He sent for the patriarch, and gave him positive orders to cut off the hair of his mother and three sisters; this was

a mark of their engaging in a monastic life. The patriarch refused to concur in so unjust an act. A more pliant hand was found; Theodora, with her three daughters, was shorn a nun, turned out of the palace, and shut up in a monastery, where she passed the remainder of her life. She died in 867; the Greeks honor her as a Saint.

Bardas was now absolute master both of the emperor and empire. Nothing hindered him from taking his full revenge upon the patriarch for the zeal he had exerted to bring him back to a due sense of his Christian duty. To banish and to depose Ignatius, and to set up the eunuch Photius in his stead, was the plan of this wicked minister. An order for the Saint's banishment into the island of Terebinthus he immediately executed: but his deposition he thought would be attended with less odium to himself, could it be effected with Ignatius' voluntary consent to resign the pastoral staff. On this errand, deputies after deputies were despatched to the illustrious exile: promises, persuasions, threats, and ill usage, were promiscuously employed to extort his resignation. To resign the pastoral staff in those circumstances, was to deliver up the flock into the jaws of the wolf, and that the holy patriarch could not do with a safe conscience. Bardas, at last, perceiving all trials useless to gain his consent, resolved to do without it; he even passed over the formality of a mock election, and on his own authority declared his friend Photius patriarch of Constantinople.

Photius, by birth, was related to the imperial family, and held at that time the office of chief secretary to the emperor. Nature had endowed this extraordinary man with uncommon talents; curiosity and study had made him an adept in almost every branch of profane learning, and after his schismatical undertakings, he provided himself with no inconsiderable stock of ecclesiastical knowledge. But with

all these shining qualifications, Photius had a depraved heart, a soul full of pride, ambition, hypocrisy, and deceit. Before he could begin to exercise the patriarchal office, it was necessary he should be ordained; for he was yet a layman. But his irregular nomination, made solely by Bardas notoriously against the canons, deterred every Catholic bishop from imposing hands upon him. Gregory, the schismatical bishop of Syracuse, whom St. Ignatius had deposed for certain crimes exhibited and proved against him, was then at Constantinople. Photius had strenuously supported Gregory in his disgrace, and now requested that he would show his gratitude in return by giving him holy orders. Gregory gladly embraced the opportunity, as well to serve his friend as to spite Ignatius. The ceremony was rapidly hurried on through the different degrees in six days. On the first day, Photius the emperor's secretary and master of the horse, was made a monk; on the second, reader; on the third, subdeacon; on the fourth, deacon; on the fifth, priest; and on the sixth, which was Christmas day, 858, bishop and patriarch. Most of the oriental bishops seem to have beheld this infamous transaction with indifference, or in timid silence. Some few, indeed, had the courage to assemble in one of the Churches of Constantinople, and to pronounce sentence of excommunication against the intruder.

SECTION X.

Proceedings of Photius.

(A. D. 866.) PHOTIUS, having got possession of the patriarchal chair, proceeded to take every precaution that he thought necessary to secure it. For although he had all the influence of Bardas Cæsar at his command, yet he was not without fear, as long as Ignatius was alive and did not resign. To counteract the censure of those prelates who condemned his intrusion, he assembled a council of his own creatures, and pronounced sentence of deposition and excommunication against Ignatius, for crimes invented by himself. He then attempted to take away his life under the cloak of justice, by causing him to be accused of treasonable practices against the state. Encouragements, threats, and tortures were employed to procure false witnesses; but nothing could be proved. Having failed in his attempt, he had recourse to violence. In hopes that the Saint's infirm constitution would soon sink under hard treatment, he took care to have him loaded with heavy irons, to be dragged from one island to another, to be beaten, to be shut up in a dungeon and close prisons, with a small pittance of food for his support. The grace of God wonderfully preserved and comforted the Saint under all these cruelties. The usurper, in the interim, was no less anxious than active to get his own promotion ratified by the Pope. He despatched messengers to Rome with a letter, in which he tells the Pope St. Nicholas, that Ignatius, by reason of his advanced age and infirmities, had spontaneously vacated the patriarchal chair, and retired to his monastery; that the Metropolitans had pitched on him for his successor, and that notwithstanding his reluctance, the emperor had compelled him to take that

weighty burden upon his weak shoulders. He accompanied this account with an orthodox profession of faith, and concluded by entreating his Holiness to send two legates to Constantinople, who, in a council of bishops, which he intended to call, should confirm his election, and decide on certain questions concerning the Iconoclasts. The emperor likewise sent a solemn embassy for the same purpose, with rich presents to the church of St. Peter. The whole had a fair appearance, splendidly calculated to flatter and deceive. But the wary pontiff was not to be thus imposed upon. He received no letter, and saw no message from Ignatius; he suspected fraud, and was therefore guarded in his answers to Photius and the emperor. In compliance with their request, he appointed two legates, Rodoald, bishop of Porto, and Zachary, bishop of Anagnia, to repair to Constantinople; the caution which he observed in his instructions to them, appears no less pointed than in his letters. His instructions were, that in deciding the questions concerning holy images, they should strictly adhere to the decrees of the seventh general Council, and that in the affair of Ignatius and Photius they should decide nothing, but take informations only for him to decide on.

With these limited powers, the Roman legates came to Constantinople in the beginning of the year 861. The partisans of Photius immediately took possession of them, guarded them like state prisoners, and suffered none but such as he chose to come near them. They were told, that information was unnecessary, that the emperor's will must be complied with, that Ignatius must be condemned. Bribes and threats were employed by turns to extort their consent. They showed their resolution at first; they stood firm for eight months; but wearied out at last, they weakly yielded, and agreed to act as the emperor should direct.

Photius saw that he might now falsely call the bishops together. They met to the number of three hundred and eighteen, including the legates, in the church of the apostles; the emperor assisted with his nobles and magistrates of the city. Ignatius was cited to appear before them. Stripped of his pontifical dress by the emperor's express order, and clad in a monk's habit, the venerable patriarch was brought in, like a criminal already condemned, and only presented there to hear the sentence read. They first pressed him to give in his episcopal resignation; he refused: they called witnesses, no fewer than seventy-two, to attest the irregularity of his ordination; he proved them perjured, and their attestations false; he persisted in declaring his own innocence, and the injustice of his persecutors; he cited the letter of St. Innocent to St. John Chrysostom; he cited the Council of Sardica, and clearly showed, that for reasons alleged by him they had no power either to depose or replace him by another, before sentence was pronounced by the bishop of Rome, to whom he solemnly appealed. His appeal, the canon of Sardica, argument and the plea of justice, made no impression upon men predetermined to condemn. The emperor dictated the sentence, the prevaricating legates assented, the oppressed patriarch, for his greater ignomy, was first clothed with his episcopal robes, then insolently stripped of them, deposed and sent off to be shut up a prisoner in the sepulchre of Constantine Copronymus.

Photius sent three ruffians after him, with orders to force from him a formal renunciation of his patriarchal dignity. These wretches cruelly beat and tormented him, kept him for a fortnight always standing, and a whole week without food and sleep, to make him sign his resignation. Being at last convinced that it was labor lost to tamper with him any

longer, they thrust a pen between his fingers, and drawing his hand by force, formed a cross upon a blank sheet of paper, which they held before him. This paper they carried to Photius, who directed an act of renunciation in Ignatius' name to be written on it, and then given to the emperor. Upon this the emperor permitted Ignatius to quit the prison, and to retire to a country-house, which formerly belonged to his mother. Here the holy patriarch enjoyed a little respite, and had an opportunity of conveying to the Pope a full account of what had passed. But the usurper's fears either were not to be removed, or his vengeance was not satiated. He obtained an order from the weak emperor, that Ignatius should be brought back into the church of the Apostles, that he should there read his own condemnation from the pulpit, then have his eyes pulled out, and his right hand cut off. Ignatius being apprised of the design, had just time to make his escape in disguise through the guards, who had suddenly surrounded his house. In a slave's dress he wandered about from place to place, concealing himself in caves, in woods, and mountains, and living upon what scanty alms he could collect. He was often met, though never known by the soldiers who were sent out to seek and kill, wherever they should find him. It happened at the time, that a dreadful earthquake, which, with some intervals, lasted for forty days, shook the city of Constantinople in a frightful manner. The terrified citizens cried aloud that it was an undoubted mark of the Divine wrath, to punish the injustice done to their holy patriarch. Even Bardas and the emperor were alarmed; they had it publicly proclaimed that Ignatius might return to his monastery, and no further harm should befall him. He returned; the earthquake ceased.

The Pope, by this time, had received authentic information of all that had been done at Constantinople. Sorely

grieved at the prevarication of his legates, and eager to wipe away the disgrace which their infamous conduct had brought upon the holy See, he lost no time in sending off his letters, one to the emperor, one to Photius, and a third to the bishops of the east. In those letters his Holiness formally disavows and annuls the acts of his legates, and declares that they had exceeded their powers, that he acknowledges Ignatius to be the true patriarch, and Photius an usurper. Photius suppressed his letter, and soon after published another, as coming from the same Pope, with a later date, containing his own justification and the pretended condemnation of Ignatius. The imposture was too thinly covered not to be seen through; it exposed and disgraced him. Wherefore, finding his credit to be on the decline, that the public could no longer be kept in ignorance, nor the Pope's favor be obtained either by forgery or by flattery, he threw off the mask at once, and rushed headlong into schism. With the emperor's concurrence, in the year 866, he called a synod, which he dignified with the appellation of an œcumenical council, although it consisted of no more than twenty-one bishops, all bribed and brought to do evil. He caused a list of accusations to be there produced against Nicholas I., bishop of ancient Rome. A sort of trial was then entered upon merely for show; Photius himself undertook to plead for the accused; he urged, as he pretends, the best arguments that could possibly be devised for his defence, till reduced to silence by the force of truth, and compelled by the authority of the council, he was under the necessity of pronouncing sentence of deposition and excommunication against Nicholas the Roman Pontiff. But with all his contrivance he could find no more than twenty-one bishops wicked enough to sign this outrageous act, though by the addition of fictitious names he swelled the number to

near a thousand. He dispersed this sentence through the east in a circular letter, in which he trumps up a general charge against the Latin church. This was the commencement of the Greek schism, which Michael Cerularius afterwards completed in the year 1053.

SECTION XI.

Downfall of Photius.

(A. D. 869.) PHOTIUS had now reached the summit of his usurped power; he had vented the last effort of his malice against the opposers of his boundless ambition. A sudden change of men and measures in the court of Constantinople hurled him down as rapidly as he had risen. Bardas Cæsar had made him a false patriarch to be revenged upon Ignatius; Bardas had supported him with the whole weight of imperial authority; Bardas was now dead. This haughty minister, by his conduct, had incurred the suspicion of aspiring to the throne. Michael both feared and hated him. With his approbation, and even in his presence, the sword of Basil, the high chancellor, put a violent and unexpected end to his life and projects. Michael, equally destitute of common prudence as of humanity, prodigally rewarded the murderer of his uncle, and thereby prepared his own. Inattentive to business, and incapable of governing alone, he adopted Basil within the month for his colleague in the empire, and had him crowned in the church of St. Sophia.

Basil, surnamed the Macedonian, from the country which gave him birth, was the son of a poor farmer, received the

education of a slave, and in his youth came to Constantinople with the hope of pushing himself forward in the world. Notwithstanding the meanness of his birth and education, Basil nourished sentiments within his breast, worthy of the dignity to which a whimsical emperor had raised him. He refused to join the licentious Michael in his midnight revels and profane mockery of religion. This caused a breach between them, which was infallibly to end soon in the death of one or of the other. Michael made the first attempt, but miscarried. Basil saw he had no time to lose; he suborned the guards to make away with the man, who, by his intemperance, unnatural lusts, impiety and cruelties, had rendered himself odious and contemptible to all his subjects. Michael, the last of his family, was inhumanly murdered by his guards, as he lay intoxicated and asleep, in the year 867.

By this bloody deed, which the public seemed not to disapprove, Basil became sole master of the empire, and Photius lost the last prop of his tottering usurpation. On the very next day, Basil banished him into the isle of Scelepe, and recalled Ignatius. The venerable exile was received with loud demonstrations of joy in the imperial city, conducted with religious pomp to his cathedral, and honorably reinstated in the patriarchal chair according to form, after a banishment of nine years. Under the sharpest adversity, Ignatius had never been dejected, nor at the return of prosperity did he now appear elated; he resumed his pastoral functions with that even tranquillity of soul, which characterises the most disinterested and most exalted virtue. The audacious proceedings of Photius he judged to be of such a nature, that an authority much higher than his own seemed to him absolutely necessary in the present juncture to repair the wrongs done by that impostor to religion. He solicited

the emperor and the pope, Adrian II., who had lately succeeded St. Nicholas, to assemble a general council. His solicitations had their due effect; the object of the council was to restore peace and union, which Photius had attempted to break between the Latin and Greek church.

Basil named Constantinople for the council to meet in. Adrian deputed three legates to preside in his name, viz: Donatus, bishop of Ostia; Stephen, bishop of Nepi; and Marinus one of the seven deacons of Rome, who was afterwards Pope. They entered the imperial city in great state, the emperor received them with every distinctive mark of honor and respect due to their character. The council met for the first time on the fifth day of October, 869, in the great church of St. Sophia, where through ten sessions they coolly treated the subject of religion, and finished their debates on the twenty-eighth of February, 870. The Pope's legates presided; Ignatius, the patriarch of Constantinople, sat next to them, as second in rank, and after him the deputies of the three oriental patriarchs. Eleven officers of the crown assisted for the preservation of order.

The first session was opened by an official discourse, read aloud in the name of the emperor, recommending to the bishops peace and unanimity in their decisions. The legates then moved, that the formulary of re-union, which they had brought with them, should be read. It was read accordingly and approved. The Council, with one voice, acknowledged the Primacy of the Roman See, in which St. Peter sat, the Head of the Apostles, the rock of Christ's Church. Many bishops, who through fear or compulsion, had taken part with Photius, appeared with marks of sorrow and regret for the little courage they had shown in defence of justice; on making an humble and submissive confession of their fault, they were charitably received into favor, and

permitted to take their seats in council. All publicly pronounced a solemn condemnation of heresies, which at any time had started up in the Church, and all renewed their profession of the Roman Catholic faith, as it had been always taught, and explicitly confirmed by the seven general preceding Councils. Photius was cited to receive punishment, or upon his repentance, forgiveness for the crimes, of which he stood notoriously guilty. He appeared with all the affectation of spotless innocence, observed a sullen silence, or if he answered any question, it was in the words of our blessed Saviour to Pontius Pilate. Neither in excuse or extenuation of the charges brought against him, had he any thing to say, nor was he the man to express repentance. Being fully convicted of cruelty, of forgery, of usurpation, and of schism, he was solemnly condemned and excommunicated. Some few adherents he still had, who were involved with him in the same anathema. His schismatical conventicles, his writings, and his acts against St. Nicholas and the Latins, were proscribed and condemned; the decrees of Nicholas, in favor of Ignatius, were received and ratified. In the last session, the emperor assisted in person; the decisions of the council were read, approved, and subscribed by the bishops present, to the number of 383, as some say, others count no more than 102. The reason of this difference may be, that the Greek original is lost. The Roman legates had it in their possession, but being taken by pirates in their return by sea, they were stripped of every thing they had. A Latin translation of its acts, faithfully made upon the spot, by Anastasius, the Roman librarian, is extant to this day in the archives of the Vatican. The bishops, before they separated, directed two synodical letters to be drawn up, one to the faithful in general, the other to Pope Adrian, requesting him to confirm

the council by his apostolical authority, and to enjoin its acceptance in the west. This is accounted the eighth general Council of the Church.

SECTION XII.

End of Photius.

(A. D. 886.) PHOTIUS being juridically condemned by the council, received an order from the emperor to quit the city, and retire into banishment. He went off with a seeming confidence, that he should one day return again in defiance of his opponents. Disgrace had not lowered his pride, nor did the censure of excommunication touch his impenitent heart. He had deep resources within himself; his fertile genius filled him with hope, that he should triumph in the end. To move compassion, and to rouse the indignation of the public in his favor, he scattered his seditious writings through the country, sometimes bemoaning his hard fate in the most plaintive strains of pathetic eloquence, and sometimes inveighing, with foul torrents of abuse, against his persecutors and the council as a convention of thieves, that had slandered, oppressed, and robbed him of every comfort in life. He continued for some years thus to brave and insult the hand of justice, till experience discovered to him, that the way he had taken to gain public favor had not advanced him a single step nearer to the great object he proposed to himself, the recovery of the patriarchal dignity. To succeed in that, it was necessary for him to obtain the emperor's good graces. The emperor's vanity opened to him a fair prospect of success. Basil, he knew,

was fond of pedigree. This furnished an ample field for a sprightly genius, like that of Photius, to sport and ramble in. Basil, the son of a Spartan farmer, raised by the caprice of his predecessor from that humble state, first to an honorable post at court, and then to a throne, wished to have it thought, that he was descended from a race of ancient kings. Photius caught the idea, and with much ingenuity composed a genealogical tree of former monarchs; on one of the branches he perched the royal Basil, as a descendant from Tiridates, the king of Armenia. The conceit worked its way; Basil was flattered; Photius was permitted to return from exile, and to reside in his family palace of Magnaurus, at Constantinople, in the year 877.

Not long after his return, Ignatius died, and made room for him in the patriarchal palace. The bold and active Photius lost not the opportunity; he took forcible possession of the cathedral Church, without any opposition from the throne. His next step was to gain the bishops; and in that the influence and the credit which he now possessed at court, gave him a powerful advantage. Partly by punishments, and partly by rewards, he soon formed a strong body; some he deposed, and promoted others. But he was still opposed by many. The sentence of deposition and excommunication had been pronounced against him by a general council, and confirmed by the Pope's authority; this authority had not yet been consulted, nor was the sentence of excommunication revoked. On that ground his restoration was strongly opposed by the sound party. To remove this opposition, and to draw the Pope into an approbation of their designs, both the emperor and Photius sent deputies to Rome. The papal chair was then filled by John VIII., who, although possessed of virtues, had not the discernment nor the fortitude of his two predecessors,

Adrian and Nicholas. Photius, in the statement of his case, had recourse to his usual tricks of falsehood and deceit; he roundly asserted, that in taking possession of the patriarchal chair, he had acted by compulsion, and with the consent of his suffragans. Basil earnestly solicited his Holiness to sanction the reinstatement of Photius, for the sake of peace. The hope of receiving succor from the Greek emperor, against the Saracens of Africa, who had invaded Italy, and threatened Rome, furnished a powerful motive to John for granting the request. John deputed three legates to Constantinople, with full powers to conclude this important business: their powers for the reinstatement of Photius were limited to the condition of his making a public retraction of his past errors, and of asking pardon before a synod of bishops. So humiliating a condition suited not the lofty spirit of Photius. He had already formed his plan, and was determined to carry every thing his own way. He had called together three hundred and eighty bishops, all devoted to his interest by a fatal versatility of genius peculiar to the Greek character. They assembled in the great church of St. Sophia, without waiting for the Roman legates; Photius took upon himself to preside, which he continued to do even after the appearance of the legates in the council, though he permitted them to sit upon a level with himself upon the same bench. The Greeks, with their president, were holding the first session, when the legates were announced and introduced. After the usual civilities had passed between them, Photius wished to know the object of their mission; they produced the Pope's letters, and said, that he would there find the matter fully explained. The reading and examination of these letters was put off to the second session. They were given to Photius, that a translation of them might be made out of the Latin original

into Greek. This imprudent confidence of the Romans afforded to the Greek a favorable opportunity of omitting or inserting whatever suited his design. He took the advantage of it. A falsified translation of the pontifical letters was read in the second Session with general marks of approbation. The legates sat silent, and their silence leaves no room to doubt of the guilt they shared in the falsification.

In the third session was proposed the re-instatement of Photius in the See of Constantinople; the conditions specified by the Pope, on which that was to be done, were likewise falsified, and the proposition passed unanimously. Thus Photius carried his point, in the manner he proposed, without stooping to make any submission or apology whatever for the glaring irregularities he had been convicted of. The following sessions were employed in pronouncing fulsome panegyrics upon Photius' superior talents and vaunted virtues of humility, meekness, moderation, piety, and benevolence; in confirming his restoration to the patriarchal chair, in declaring all that had been done against him by the Popes Nicholas and Adrian, by Ignatius and their councils, to be null and void; in denouncing the censure of excommunication against all such as should schismatically refuse to communicate with him; and lastly in proclaiming the union of the Greek and Latin churches to be finally concluded. The emperor assisted at the seventh and last session of this illegitimate council, and with the bishops subscribed its acts. By Photius it is called the eighth œcumenical council, and held for such by the Greek schismatics to the present day, though in fact it was nothing less than an execrable cabal.

The Pope received the acts of this convention but under certain limitations, as far, at least, as concerned the

condemnation of the eighth general council, which he never would consent to; he ratified the union of the two churches, and the restoration of Photius; and, although he disavowed the acts, and condemned the prevarication of his legates, yet he continued to hold Photius for his brother and co-adjutor in the episcopacy to his latest breath. His successors, Marinus II., Adrian III., and Stephen IV., refused to communicate with the impostor, and condemned him, as Nicholas and Adrian II. had done. Their censures remained without effect as long as Basil, his protector, lived. But after the death of that emperor, in 886, when his son Leo, surnamed the Wise, succeeded to the throne, Photius was a second time compelled to relinquish his usurped dignity, and to retire into a monastery of Armenia, where he finished his schismatical career, in 893.

The conduct of John VIII., in his transaction with Photius and the Greeks, is stamped with such marks of weakness, that the public voice has proclaimed it to be more like the conduct of a woman than that of a man; it has given occasion to the fabulous story of a female pontiff, as Baronius remarks, under the noted appellation of Pope Joan. Protestant writers dwell with delight upon the idea of a female Pope, and embellish the tale with a variety of ludicrous and indecent circumstances, for the entertainment of their readers, though with no great credit to themselves. Fiction has placed the existence of this remarkable heroine about twenty-two years earlier than Pope John VIII., it places the imaginary phenomenon between Leo IV., and Benedict III., giving it a duration of two years, and thereby destroys the credibility of its own production. Contemporary writers, living at Rome, link the death of Leo and the election of Benedict together, within the interval of five days only, in the same year, 855. In the genuine writings

of Anastasius, who lived and wrote at the time, no mention is made of this story; a passage relating to it has been foisted into some manuscripts of that learned librarian, and it even appears in some editions of his works; but as Mr. Gibbon observes,* in his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, the passage is a palpable forgery. The hundred and fifty authorities which the advocates for Pope Joan's existence exultingly produce, are as so many echoes to one another, repeating in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, the same empty sound, without the substance of any real proof. The wonderful event, had it ever existed, would certainly have flashed with double force upon the writers of the ninth or tenth centuries. Would Photius, in his invectives against the Roman See, have spared such a reproach? Could the discerning Luitprand have overlooked such a scandal? The laughable phantom has long since been exploded by the more enlightened critics of the Protestant communion. Spanheim, indeed, and Lenfant have made a pitiful attempt against Blondel and Bayle, to save their favorite engine of controversy from oblivion: Mosheim even seems unwilling to give it up.

* Vol. v, c. 49.

SECTION XIII.

Triumph of the Church over Error.

(A. D. 887.) WITHIN the space of five hundred and fifty years, the Catholic Church held eight general Councils to proscribe various heresies and errors, which at different times sprung up and disturbed her peace. These councils were all held in the east, where error had its birth. The inspired Apostle told the Corinthians,* that there must be heresies. Heresies spring from the pride and perversity of man's heart, from the narrowness and blindness of his understanding, which cannot comprehend the sublime mysteries of divine faith, nor fathom the depth of revealed truths. By the abuse of reason, self-conceited man affects to call every thing into doubt which restrains his sensual appetites, and to believe nothing which his senses cannot reach. Christians, thus liable to err in matters that concern their eternal happiness, stand in need of some guide to direct their judgment in the right faith. This guide they have, by Christ's own appointment, in the establishment of his Holy Catholic Church, which he has promised to teach all truth for ever by his divine Spirit,† against which the gates of hell never shall prevail,‡ and which he commands all to hear, under pain of being no better looked upon than the heathen or the publican.§ Vested with this authority, and directed by this unerring Spirit of truth, secured to her through every age to the world's end by the express promise** of her divine Founder, the Church has always triumphed over the most obstinate efforts which the prince of darkness has at any time made, either to weaken her

* 1 Cor. c. xi, v. 19. † John, c. xv. ‡ Matt. c. xvi, v. 18. § Matt. c. xviii, v. 17. ** Matt. c. xxviii, v. 20.

authority, or to corrupt her doctrine. The trophies which she erected over the bloody persecutions of Paganism, over the subtle sophisms of proud philosophy, and the more plausible opposition of Judaism, are visible marks of the omnipotent hand which created and supports her.

Scarce had the Christian Church begun to breathe under the fostering reign of Constantine, when Arius impiously attacked the Divinity of her Founder, and sounded the trumpet of rebellion against the purity of her doctrine. The Church called her pastors together; and when they are thus gathered in the name of Christ, Christ is in the midst of them.* The question was fairly discussed and decided. Error was confounded; truth triumphed. Constantius, drunk with the cup of seduction, and after him the more violent Valens, exerted their whole authority, with hundreds of temporising bishops in their train, to force upon the world the impious reveries of an Alexandrine presbyter, for the divine doctrines of the Son of God. Arianism, for a time, committed woful ravages as long as she had the civil power for her support, but she quickly fell into variance with herself, she split into jarring sects and died away, leaving the Church in triumphant possession of her primitive belief. After Arianism, arose other monsters of the same infernal origin, though in different shapes under the name of Macedonianism, Nestorianism, Eutychism, Monothelism, and Iconoclasm; these, for a while, made furious war upon the Church, and in the end furnished her with new subjects of triumph. In the adorable mysteries of the Trinity, and Incarnation, in the divine and human nature of our blessed Redeemer, there is scarce an article which the speculative genius of the orientals has not misrepresented and wrested to a wrong sense. The Church has constantly rallied round

* Matt. c. xviii, v. 20.

the centre of unity, and under the promised guidance of God's holy Spirit, has victoriously repelled the insults of all her adversaries. By her, each contested article *has been* solemnly decided; she has uniformly maintained the doctrines which she was in possession of from the beginning, and they, who sought to disturb her peace by the introduction of new tenets, have never been able to prevail. A Constantius, and a Valens, could no more alter the Church's faith, than a Dioclesian or a Nero could hinder its establishment.

But as we advance in our view of the Catholic Church through the subsequent ages, we shall discover new schisms and new heresies emerging from the dark abyss, all animated with the same bold, assuming spirit, and bearing the same mark of the Beast in their forehead. In whatever age the sectary springs into public notice, he is pointed at as a stranger, unknown to the Christian world; he is shunned as an ill-designing vagabond of spurious production, till by smooth and specious appearances he forms a party. Whatever boast he may make of the antiquity of his religious pedigree, he never can make his title good. The moment he begins to dogmatize against the ancient doctrines of the Catholic Church, he breaks the bond of alliance with Jesus Christ, her divine Spouse, and becomes the father of an illegitimate offspring. After a certain lapse of years, this new race of new believers may glory in their worldly power, and lord it over the genuine sons of light; but this will not realize their pretensions to primitive belief. The highest degree, to which they can possibly ascend for the antiquity of their Creed, will be to some innovating teacher, who from his infancy had been nursed and fed in the bosom of his mother Church, till he unnaturally raised his voice to disobey and insult her. His name, his country,

his connections, his errors, his revolt and separation from the body of the faithful, are universally known, and authentic records will transmit them with disgrace to the latest posterity. The patronymic name of each new born sect indicates the author of its first existence. The Arian dates his birth from Arius, the Nestorian from Nestorius, the Eutychian from Eutyches, the Pelagian from Pelagius, and all posterior upstarts in like manner cite their respective founders of belief. But none of these come near to the Apostolic age, the age of the Catholic Church's first institution. Every system or mode of faith, set on foot since that period, has not Christ for its author.

The real Church of Christ bears a name and character, which the Apostles gave it in their Creed from the beginning, and which no sect has ever been able to arrogate to itself. The name of Catholic, or universal, has through every age characterized that Church, of which our blessed Lord constituted St. Peter the visible head after his ascension into heaven. St. Peter fixed his episcopal chair at Rome, and from that epoch the Church of Rome has been denominated the holy Catholic Church of Christ. Within her fold, all nations of the earth have been received upon their first conversion from Paganism to Christianity, so that in the words of Christ,* they make but one sheepfold and one shepherd. Notwithstanding the efforts, which succeeding innovators have made to rob the Church of Rome of her holy Catholic title, either by misrepresentation of facts, or by the imputation of doctrines, which never entered into the symbol of her belief, she has triumphantly maintained her primitive characteristic unsullied and unbroken. Many nations have proved unfaithful to the grace of their vocation; they have not kept their first faith; they have gone

* John, c. x, v. 16.

out of the Catholic communion, and by an authority, purely political, have established a national Church of modern invention. Even in that appears the antiquity and the triumph of the holy Roman Catholic Church. For, in spite of penal statutes, of proscriptions, of exclusions, and persecution, respectable remnants of Catholicity still remain among them, who bear a living and hereditary testimony to the faith of their forefathers, who incessantly relate to their children, and their children's children, by whom the change of religion was made, when and how the ancient form of worship was banished, and new creeds introduced. They trace their own religious pedigree to the very source of Christianity, and by an uninterrupted succession of pastors in the Roman See, ascend in one continued line to St. Peter, whom Christ appointed to govern and to feed his flock.



SECTION XIV.

England ravaged by the Danes.

(A. D. 871.) FROM the Eastern empire, we look back on the Western hemisphere, where we left Egbert sole monarch of England. This renowned king had not long enjoyed the fruit of his conquests, which cemented the Saxon heptarchy into one kingdom, when his peace was broken by the invasion of Danish pirates, who came over like swarms of locusts, and ravaged every thing that lay in their way. Christianity had but faintly shed its rays upon the coast of Denmark; the Danes were still a nation of ferocious heathens. Egbert opposed them with all that vigor which

characterised his active genius, but unfortunately died before he had time to secure the country against their future insults. He left the throne to his son Ethelwolf, in 838, but Ethelwolf had neither the vigor nor the talents of Egbert. In his youth he had indulged an illicit passion, and by a concubine, had a son called Athelstan. Touched with remorse, he vowed a perpetual chastity, and entered among the monks in the abbey of Winchester, where he is said to have received the order of Subdeacon. He had an elder brother then living; this prince dying some time after, and leaving no issue to inherit the crown, Ethelwolf became heir apparent. Not to expose the nation to the danger of a civil contest about the succession, Egbert judged it prudent to ask a dispensation from the Pope for his son Ethelwolf to marry. His Holiness, Gregory IV., thought the petition well grounded, and freed Ethelwolf from his vow of celibacy by virtue of the power which Christ* gave him in the grant made to St. Peter. Ethelwolf took to wife Osburga, a noble and virtuous lady, by whom he had four sons, all in succession sovereigns of England; Ethelbald, Ethelbert, Ethelred, and Alfred. During this king's inactive yet pious reign, the Danes renewed their annual depredations, almost with impunity, as no effectual measures were taken by government either to repel or prevent their invasions. The unprotected husbandman was left to defend himself and property as he could. In the year 853, the devout king made a pilgrimage to Rome, with his favorite son Alfred, then only six years old. He passed about a year at Rome, in acts of the most fervent piety, and in his return through France married the princess Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald; for he was a widower. In 855 he called a national council of all England, to meet at Winchester. There, by

* Matt. c. xvi, v. 19.

the advice and consent of the bishops and nobles of the realm, he published a royal mandate for the payment of tithes to the Church. One reason alleged for the new order was, that the Clergy might hereby be disengaged from all temporal concerns, and to be free to dedicate their whole time to prayer and other duties of the sacred ministry. Ethelwolf survived this religious act but two years; by will he divided the kingdom between his two eldest sons, Ethelbald and Ethelbert.

Ethelbald was a profligate prince; in lust he emulated the incestuous Corinthian, by taking to his bed Judith, his father's widow. The scandalous connection caused so loud an outcry through the nation, that at the end of a few months he was obliged to yield to the strong remonstrances of St. Swithun, the bishop Winchester, and to send the lady out of the kingdom. She afterwards married Baldwin, the first earl of Flanders. Ethelbald, by an humble submission to the penitential canons of the church, endeavored to repair the public scandal he had given. His reign was short; his death, in 860, put his brother Ethelbert in possession of the whole monarchy, which he held for six years with great reputation. After his demise, Ethelred mounted the throne. The Danish invaders gave this valiant and active prince continual employment in the field during the whole eleven years that he reigned. He died of a wound which he received in battle, and left the inheritance of his crown, with all its thorny appendages, to his fourth brother, the illustrious Alfred.

During the four successive reigns after Egbert, the Danes never ceased to infest the English coast. In their flat bottomed boats they ran up the rivers, and poured over the country innumerable shoals of savage plunderers, who stripped the inhabitants of their wealth, and wantonly destroyed

what they could not carry off. Hinguar and Hubba, two brothers and commanders, particularly distinguished themselves by the devastation which they spread through the eastern parts of the kingdom. They landed in great force on the north-eastern shore, pervaded Northumberland, penetrated into Mercia, and directing their march through Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, and Cambridgeshire, entered with fire and sword into the provinces of the east Angles. Edmund, a virtuous prince of royal Saxon blood, there governed with the title of king, but with a subordinate power under the sovereign of England. Too weak to resist, he fell into the hands of the savages that came against him. They offered him life and liberty on certain terms. The terms were incompatible with religion; he nobly rejected them. Hinguar ordered him to be tortured, to be tied to a tree and scourged. The mob set him up as a butt to shoot at, till his body was covered with arrows, like the quills of a porcupine. Hinguar himself was moved with pity at the sight, and to end his pain at once, ordered his head to be struck off. King Edmund suffered in the year 870, and is honored as a martyr. His body was buried in the principal town of Suffolk, which from that circumstance is called St. Edmund's-bury.

Plunder being the chief object of this desultory war, the barbarians seldom chose to risk the issue of a battle. If by chance they were sometimes surprised by the English, and drawn into an engagement, the check they received only served to provoke the desire of revenge. Being idolaters, they directed their rage in a more decisive manner against the churches and monasteries, which they first pillaged, and then burnt in hatred of the Christian name. Whole communities of religious men and women were inhumanly slaughtered by them, and their convents destroyed. The

great monasteries of Winchester, of Bardney, of Croyland, of Petersborough, of Ely, and Huntingdon, fell, one after another, victims to their barbaric fury. Traces of their exterminating cruelty extended along the coast, from the banks of the Exe, in Devonshire, to the north of Tweed, in Caledonia.

SECTION XV.

Alfred the Great.

(A. D. 880.) KING ETHELBERT, the second brother of Alfred, left a son, who, according to descent, should have inherited the crown. That prince was then a minor; his grandfather, Ethelwolf, had overlooked him in his will, and bequeathed the kingdom to Alfred. Against the attacks of obstinate invaders, the nation then called for greater abilities than are usually found in a minor. A powerful enemy was in possession of no small part of its territory; the Danish rovers lay lodged within its bosom, and carried their depredations far and wide. The English were dispirited by misfortunes, they were divided into parties, and unwilling to unite for the common good. Under these disadvantages, Alfred, at the age of twenty-four, took up the reins of government. He began his reign like a Christian hero, by putting himself and people under the protection of the Most High. His amiable and shining talents gained him the respect and confidence of all his subjects. He took care to represent to them the necessity of rousing from their drooping inactivity, and of exerting their collected courage in defence of their country: he summoned the English youth

to meet him in the field; he infused the spirit of military order and discipline into them, and commenced a vigorous war against the enemy. In four successful campaigns he broke the insolence of the infidels, and reduced them to terms of peace. But perfidious men never think themselves any longer bound to the observance of terms, than they are unable to break them.

The barren sands of Denmark raised not sufficient crops to feed the increasing numbers of its inhabitants. The hungry and hardy savages swarmed from home into other countries, more for food than for conquest. They had long since discovered England, which held out to them not only the necessaries, but the luxuries of life. A temporary plunder at first supplied their wants, and satisfied their ambition; by degrees they aspired to conquest and a permanent settlement in the country. They called over fresh troops, and made vigorous efforts to repair the losses which they had sustained from the victories of Alfred. Vast hordes of fierce adventurers continued to land in the west of England; they poured along like a torrent, swept away every thing before them, took the royal palace of Chippenham, in Wiltshire, and laid the country waste as far as Exeter. Alfred had not a force to stop their progress. His desponding subjects thought themselves abandoned by heaven, and for their sins delivered over to the scourge of the faithless Pagans, whom no arms could resist, and no treaties bind. In vain did the intrepid Alfred strive to rally and to rouse them into action. The preservation of their property, of their liberty, of their country, and religion, had no influence on men, who, for a time, seem to have forgotten every loyal and patriotic principle. They ignobly slunk from the royal standard, and left their sovereign almost alone to manage as he could. A few faithful followers still

remained steady to their duty, but their number was too small to make an open stand, or even to defend their royal master against any serious attack. Hard necessity obliged the deserted monarch to lay aside every mark of royalty, and to skulk about in disguise, watching some favorable opportunity of retrieving his affairs. He secured to himself and attendants a retreat in a boggy part of Somersetshire, between the Thone and Paret; the spot now bears the name of Athelney. There he lay concealed for about twelve months: the Danes thought him dead, and no rival left to contest their power in the field. Secure as they thought, of peaceable possession in their new settlements, they exercised a tyrannous sway over all the country. Oddunc, the spirited earl of Devonshire, was at last roused to resist their insolence; he armed his vassals, put himself at their head, and falling suddenly upon a detached party of their army, commanded by Hubba, completely routed them. Hubba fell in battle; their enchanted banner, the noted Reafen, which they had been taught to revere as a certain pledge of victory, was taken by the conquerors.

The vigor displayed by the English, on this occasion, determined Alfred to sally from his retreat, and to renew the war. He formed his plan for an attack upon the main body of the enemy's forces, which, in indolent security, lay encamped at Eddington, under the command of Guthrum, generalissimo of the Danish troops. He despatched emissaries to the most martial of his nobles, with a summons to prepare for offensive war, and to be ready with their warlike followers to meet him on the day and at the place he should assign. In the interim he took care to inform himself of the position and precise strength of the enemy. The stratagem he used on that occasion, was new and hazardous. In the disguise of an itinerant harper, he went to

the Danish camp; the sentinel let him pass; he pushed forward to the tent of Guthrum. Guthrum was no less charmed with the tuneful variations of the melodious harp, than with the graceful skill of the musician. He kept him for some days. This gave Alfred all the time he wished, to visit every quarter of the camp, to inspect their works, to observe their discipline, and to mark the advantageous points of attack. By a second notice, he then ordered his trusty nobles to rendezvous at Brixton, upon the borders of Selwood forest. There he joined them, and seeing their eagerness for action, led them straight to Eddington, where, from the observations he had made, he expected to meet with little or no resistance. The Danes in fact were wholly off their guard; they saw their intrenchments stormed before they knew an enemy was nigh; not prepared to fight, they fled in every direction, and left the English nothing more to do than to kill and take prisoners. They were completely routed.

Alfred vigorously pursued his good fortune; he allowed them no time to breathe or rally from their defeat; he despatched troops on every side, and scoured the whole country. The infidels had now no resource but in the victor's clemency. They laid down their arms, cried aloud for mercy, and promised to subscribe whatever terms of peace the English monarch should please to dictate.

Alfred, no less generous in principle, than brave in action, made them liberal concessions. He gave them the choice either to become Christians, and remain in England, or to be carried back into their own country without ransom. Policy, as well as religion, directed him to make them this offer. The length and fierceness of the war had reduced a great part of Northumberland and Eastanglia to a desert.

The inhabitants were either slain or driven from their homes. To such Danes as chose to remain in *England*. Alfred allotted certain shares of those desolated lands for their own particular use, which was no small advantage to the kingdom at large. Among the many who chose to remain and live under the protection of the English laws, Gothrum was the chief; Alfred invested him with a subordinate authority, for the maintenance of peace and good order among his boorish countrymen.

SECTION XVI.

Achievements of King Alfred.

(A. D. 900.) THIS last overthrow of the Danes, in 880. gave peace and security to the nation for some years. Alfred, equally renowned for political as for military knowledge, immediately began to repair the damages occasioned by the war, and to guard against a renewal of them. He instituted a national militia, which was regularly trained, and always ready to march at the first alarm of an enemy being near. He considerably increased his navy, by which he asserted his superiority at sea, and with advantage encountered the enemy upon his own element. Many of the towns up and down the kingdom had been burnt and ruined by the Danes; those he repaired and rebuilt, besides numerous castles and fortresses, which he erected and fortified at proper places, so that the whole kingdom was like one united garrison of defence. But the most lamentable effect of this predatory war, was the mischief done to

religion and morality. By destroying the monasteries, the Danes destroyed the nurseries of piety and learning; the monks were either murdered or dispersed, their libraries were burnt, and their schools shut up: all study was at an end. Ignorance and licentiousness necessarily ensued. An illiterate and corrupt clergy entered the sanctuary, which they disgraced by their irregular and immoral lives. After a lapse of fifty years, that the horrors of war had lasted, the general ignorance was such, that few clergymen were to be found who understood the Latin service of the Church. Many of the deserted monasteries, during the public confusion, were seized upon by these unworthy members of the secular clergy, who, in defiance of their bishops, and of all ecclesiastical law, there kept their concubines, and revelled in the indulgence of every sensual delight. Yet those are the men whom Archbishop Parker, in his *British Antiquities*, extols as shining lights of the sacred ministry, and patterns of the purest virtues. He styles them devout priests, religiously engaged in the state of lawful wedlock, gloriously emerging from the gloom of monkish superstition, and displaying to the Christian world the bright archetype of true piety.

Very different was the idea entertained by Alfred of those disorderly churchmen. That religious prince was ashamed of their profligacy and their ignorance. To correct the first, he enacted wholesome statutes, by and with the advice of his bishops; and to remove the second, he re-established schools in every part of England; he founded or repaired the university of Oxford, invited proper professors from abroad, and gave every encouragement in his power to the revival of letters and piety among his subjects. By his own literary performances, he at

once supplied the dearth of living writers, and roused the application of drowsy students. For the benefit of the illiterate clergy, he translated the ecclesiastical history of Bede, the Roman history of Orosius, the dialogues of St. Gregory, and the work of Boetius upon the consolation of Philosophy. For the direction of his civil magistrates, whom he appointed to watch over the public polity of the land, he partly collected from his predecessors, and partly framed from his own superior knowledge, a code of excellent laws, which he took care to have well observed. No king was ever more beloved, or better served by his subjects, than the incomparable Alfred. With a lenity of temper, which was natural to him, he enforced the strictest justice. In a judge or civil magistrate whom he considered as the guardians of his people's rights, he never overlooked the least wilful act of injustice.

For the better administration of justice, and the preservation of right order, he divided the kingdom into counties, the counties he subdivided into hundreds, and the hundreds into tithings. A tithing consisted of ten neighboring householders, who were formed into a corporation. Every man was obliged to register his name in some tithing, under the penalty of being treated as an outlaw. By this wise institution, no vagrant could stroll through the country with impunity, and no open misdemeanor could happen without being publicly noticed. All actions, whether criminal or civil, were tried in his courts of justice by a jury of twelve men, of equal condition upon oath. This trial by jury is the valuable privilege of Englishmen to the present day; the institution was Alfred's. Admirable indeed are all the institu-

tions and achievements of this enlightened king, not only because they were attended with general utility to the nation, but because they were founded in principle, dictated by wisdom, and perfected by reflection. To promote the divine service, to restore piety and religion, and to make his subjects happy in the secure possession of every civil enjoyment, was the glorious object to which Alfred directed all his plans and undertakings. His hand and mind were never idle; by him no time was wasted in expensive or unprofitable amusements, the frequent abuse of wealth and independence. The twenty-four hours were divided into three equal parts, one of which, when not hindered by his wars, he allotted to study and prayer, the second to public business, the third to corporal refection and rest. The yearly revenues of his patrimony were divided with the same regularity into two equal shares; the first of which, in four equal portions, he assigned for the poor, for his schools, for the monasteries he founded, and for other occasional charities. The second moiety of his income was employed in three divisions, one to pay the officers and servants of his court, another to pay his workmen, the third to defray the expenses of hospitality and of his household. Those superior qualities which constitute the character of a great prince, were more than sufficient to have wiped away any blot that might have fallen upon it. But no writer in any age or country has ever charged the immaculate Alfred with a single vice. The discerning world has justly distinguished him among the monarchs of England by the surname of Great: and, in effect, whether we consider him as a soldier in the field, as a politician in the cabinet, or as a

Christian in his palace, laboring under all the disadvantages of the age in which he lived, perhaps we shall not be thought too partial or too bold in pronouncing him to be the most accomplished character that ever graced the British throne. He concluded a glorious reign of twenty-nine years by an edifying death, in the year 901, the fifty-fourth of his age.

CENTURY X.

SECTION 1.

Rolla, first Duke of Normandy.

(A. D. 912.) WHILE England mourned to see her lands laid waste, her cities burnt, and her fair monuments of piety destroyed by fierce invaders from the north, France likewise experienced the same calamities from the same savage nation. The same spirit of enterprize and plunder, which wafted the Danish galleys to the English shore, carried numbers of them at the same time to the opposite coast, upon the continent. Danes, Angles, Jutes, and other savages lying round the borders of the Baltic, composed the formidable host. By one common name the French call them Normans, or men of the north, as they all came from a country situated to the north of France. Towards the beginning of the foregoing century, these adventurers landed in great force near the mouth of the Rhine, and began an irregular and desultory kind of war upon the defenceless inhabitants. In armed bodies they made quick excursions through the country, and as quickly retreated, laden with plunder, which they conveyed on board their galleys, before any regular troops could come up with them. In this manner they continued for many years to ravage the coast and territory to a certain distance along the banks of the Rhine and Meuse. Maastricht, Liege, Tongres, Cologne, Juliers, and Aix-la-Chapelle were taken in their turn and plundered by them. The love of plunder drew them by degrees farther into the country. In the

year 884, Hastings, one of their leaders, who had acquired some military skill, led them on through Flanders, Artois, and Picardy, carrying terror and desolation wherever he directed his march. The villages were reduced to ashes, the monasteries and churches were demolished, the highways were strewed with dead bodies, numbers without distinction of age, sex or rank, were either wantonly butchered or reduced to a state of servitude. But what was still more deplorable for the country, and more shameful to religion, many of the French themselves joined the standard of the infidels, and renounced their faith to share in the plunder.

Carloman, the son of Lewis the Stammerer, and grandson of Charles the Bald, a weak prince, then sat at the helm; he had neither troops nor courage to face an insolent enemy, who, at the expense of France, had learned to keep the field, to fight pitched battles, and to carry on a regular siege. He undertook to treat with the Danish chief, and by laying down a large sum of money, which he collected from the clergy, prevailed upon him to lead off his troops. Not long after he had purchased this shameful peace, he died of a wound, which he received in the chase from a wild boar; he left no issue, but he had a brother, known afterwards by the name of Charles the Simple, then an infant only five years old, and sole heir to the crown. On account of his age, and the turbulency of the times, the lords of France thought proper to set the young prince aside, and to offer the crown to the emperor, Charles the Fat. The offer was equally injudicious and unjust. For Charles, though lineally descended from Charlemagne, labored under that debility, both of body and mind, which rendered him as incapable as an infant to support the charge which they offered, and he accepted. The Normans

took the advantage of it, and demanded a fresh tribute. The demand was not complied with; they renewed hostilities, marched into the heart of France, and laid siege to Paris, in 886. Charles, too infirm to act or to command, confined himself to his Germanic states, was abandoned by his subjects and dethroned. He died in the year 888, destitute even of the necessities of life, but what he received from the hand of charity.

Upon the death of Charles the Fat, the disjointed empire of the west tumbled again into pieces. Italy was split into separate states, and underwent various changes of government, as contending factions happened to prevail by turns. The princes of Germany placed Arnulf upon the imperial throne. Arnulf was the son of Carloman, Charles the Fat's brother. The lords of France chose Eudes, or Odo, the valiant earl of Paris, for their king, and the archbishop of Sens set the crown upon his head. Eudes was possessed of merit, which may have rendered him worthy of a crown, but to the crown of France he had no other title than what the suffrages of the nobles gave him. The voice of election gave him regal power, and that power he vigorously exerted for the good of his country. He attacked the Normans, forced them to raise the siege of Paris, and to evacuate the kingdom. This important service gained him universal popularity; but his assumption of the crown discontented many. The principle of hereditary right formed a considerable party in favor of Charles the Simple, the posthumous son of Lewis the Stammerer. In the year 898, that party publicly acknowledged the young prince, about fourteen years old, for their king, and Foulques, the archbishop of Rheims, crowned him. Eudes, whose mind was above the suggestions of low jealousy, peaceably let the royal youth enjoy the empty title, while he possessed the

power of king. He continued to govern France with sovereign authority till the year 898, when he died and was buried at St. Denis' among the kings of France.

The death of Eudes put Charles in full possession of the Gallic throne without a rival. The Normans thought it a favorable juncture for them to renew the war. Under the command of Rollo, a bold and warlike chieftain, they overran the greatest part of Neustria, since called Normandy, and committed dreadful ravages. These bloody scenes, with some interruptions, had desolated the different provinces of France for near seventy years. The king, unable to repel by force, took the resolution of making them his friends, whom he could not subdue as enemies. A truce of three months was agreed upon, during which time all hostilities were to cease, and a treaty set on foot for cementing a lasting peace and friendship between the two nations. On the part of Charles, it was proposed to Rollo that he should renounce idolatry, and embrace the Christian religion; on that condition, the king offered to give him his daughter in marriage, and to cede to him and his heirs, forever, all the territory of Neustria, which now bears the name of Normandy, as a fief of the crown of France. The offer and condition were accepted and executed. Rollo, in baptism, took the name of Robert, under which name he is known for the first sovereign Duke of Normandy. He caused his Pagan followers to be instructed in the Christian faith, made good the damages done by his Normans to monasteries and churches, enacted salutary laws, and encouraged the public practice of religion among all his new subjects.

SECTION II.

State of Religion in England.

(A. D. 944.) ALFRED was succeeded by his son Edward, surnamed the Elder, who, with the crown, inherited many of the good qualities of his illustrious father. In the beginning of his reign he had to contend with a powerful competitor, Ethelwald, his cousin-german, who being son to Ethelbert, Alfred's elder brother, claimed a prior right to the throne. He was supported in his claim by a strong party of the English; the Danish colonies of Eastanglia and Northumberland joined his standard. The contest was maintained with great animosity on both sides, till Ethelwald fell in battle, and left Edward in quiet possession of the throne. The scene of civil war was scarcely closed, when a foreign enemy appeared to break the peace of England. New swarms of Danes invaded the British coast; their perfidious countrymen, to whom Alfred had granted riches and the privileges of English subjects, immediately joined them. With these foreign and domestic Danes, Edward was constantly engaged for the last fourteen years of his reign. By repeated victories he quelled them in the end. But the tumult even of successful war, favored not the peaceful habits of religion. Owing to the war, general had been the neglect of filling up the vacant Sees of deceased bishops; in the whole west of England not a single bishop was left; the inferior clergy were suffered to trample on the sacred canons of the Church without shame and without restraint; the people, in fine, had no pastors to look up to for instruction, for edification, or for help, in their spiritual distress. Complaints of this forlorn state of the English Church being made to the sovereign pontiff, John

IX., his Holiness despatched a pastoral letter to King Edward, in which he weightily admonishes and exhorts his Majesty to redress the growing evil. The king in consequence, as William of Malesbury relates,* called a council of his chief clergy and nobles to deliberate with him upon the means of correcting the abuses complained of, and of complying with the Pope's just remonstrances. Plegmund, the archbishop of Canterbury, presided; by the king and council it was unanimously agreed, that the vacant Sees should be immediately filled up, that in the west three new bishoprics should be erected, one for Cornwall, another for Devonshire, and a third for Somersetshire; that the parishes should be divided anew, and that Plegmund should be deputed to Rome, for the purpose of obtaining the papal sanction to these regulations. Plegmund executed his commission to the satisfaction of all; upon his return, he consecrated seven new bishops in one day, anno 906.† This was a great step towards the restoration of right order; but the evil had taken too deep root to be eradicated by one stroke.

Edward, after a vigorous reign of twenty-four years, died in 924, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Athelstan, who, by some of our English historians, is falsely said to have been of spurious birth. Their assertion rests on a bare surmise that no marriage ever existed between his mother Eguina, and his father Edward, because it was never publicly declared. Eguina had beauty, which captivated Edward's heart, but no nobility of blood to recommend her to a throne. Her marriage, on that account, was not formally proclaimed, though unequivocally acknowledged by Alfred. Hence those authors seem to have committed another oversight in asserting, that according to the

* L. ii, c. 5.

† Alfordi. Ann. vol. 2.

custom of those times illegitimacy was no bar to the crown. By no facts does it appear, that such a custom then existed in England.

Athelstan was an accomplished prince, universally beloved by his subjects, and feared by the old enemies of his crown, the Welsh, the Scots, and restless Danes of Northumberland. For the encouragement of piety and learning, he founded a noble monastery at Exeter, which afterwards became the cathedral, when the bishop's seat was removed from Crediton to Exon. He reigned sixteen years, and then dying without issue, anno 940, the crown devolved on Edmund, his half-brother by Edgiva, his father's third wife.

Edmund was but eighteen years old, when he began to reign. He was endowed with good talents, both natural and acquired; the steady and prudent conduct which he displayed in a short reign of six years, would have done credit to a riper age. He enacted several salutary laws for the establishment of right order both in church and state. The excesses of the incontinent clergy continued to give great scandal and disturbance in the nation. They kept obstinate possession of their concubines, and of the Benedictine monasteries. In vain did the bishops exhort, rebuke and threaten. Ecclesiastical censures had no effect upon men who were grown callous by the force of evil habits. The measures hitherto adopted to make these hardened sinners sensible of their duty, had proved ineffectual. Strong measures became necessary. In the year 944, the king convened a numerous synod of bishops, abbots, and nobles, in which, by the joint concurrence of the ecclesiastical and civil powers, it was enacted, "That all clergymen in higher orders shall lead a chaste life, conformably to the character they bear, under the penalty of forfeiting their

temporalities, and of being deprived of Christian burial, if they die impenitent."

By writers, little versed in ecclesiastical history, these coercive measures are frequently misrepresented as a tyrannical stretch of power over the natural rights of the clergy. But it is not so. When these clergymen took holy orders, they freely and solemnly bound themselves to observe the law of celibacy, which was annexed to that state, and which was known to be as ancient as the Church itself. Even the Centuriators of Magdeburg * allow the obligation of celibacy to be incumbent upon all who aspire to the office of bishop, of priest, of deacon, and subdeacon. "If a matrimonial connection is any where formed by a bishop, priest, deacon, or subdeacon, says Epiphanius,† it is not according to the canon, but according to the sensual appetite of man." This canon was observed with religious nicety, as Bede testifies,‡ by the English clergy in his time; and so it continued, till the Danish invasion opened a gap to every kind of licentiousness and vice. A degenerate clergy seized that opportunity of following the impulse of corrupt nature in contempt of the law, which at their ordination they had engaged faithfully to observe as long as they lived. Before their ordination, the marriage state was open to their free choice; but being once ordained, they were no longer at liberty to make that choice. Such was, and ever had been, the law and discipline of Christ's Church from the beginning. A cloud of testimonies, in proof of this assertion, might be produced from councils and the holy Fathers, as may be seen in all Catholic writers upon this subject. From these venerable testimonies it is evinced that the laws, enacted under Edmund and others of our English Saxon kings, against the uxorious clergy,

* Cent. 7. † Here. 59. ‡ L. 3. de Tabern. and In. c. 1, *Law.*

imposed no new obligation upon them, but only tended, by just punishments, to correct and bring them back to the primitive discipline of their profession.

Edmund, through his own imprudence, met with an untimely death, in 946. According to annual custom he gave a public banquet to his nobles, on the feast of St. Austin, the Apostle of England. Leof, a notorious robber and outlaw, entered the hall; and being ordered out, refused to go. Provoked at his insolence, the king hastily arose from his seat, and seizing him by the hair, dragged him to the ground. During the struggle, the ruffian drew his dagger and buried it in the king's body. The king expired upon the spot.

SECTION III.

St. Dunstan, Primate of England.

(A. D. 961.) EDMUND left two sons, Edwi and Edgar, neither of an age to be vested with regal power. The voice of the nation called upon Edred, the late king's younger brother, to take the reins of government. Edred was endowed with talents, that fitted him for the important charge. He governed in his own name, styling himself king of Great Britain, and monarch of all England. The interests of his people, the suppression of vice, a zeal for religion, and the administration of public justice, directed the system of Edred's government, and merited him the character of a good king. By Mr. Hume he is, of course, stigmatized for a weak and superstitious prince, because, in the conscientious discharge of his Christian duty to God

and man, he thought fit to ask and follow the advice of St. Dunstan, the prudent and virtuous abbot of Glastonbury. A lingering illness put an end to the reign and life of Edred, in 995. Edwi, his eldest nephew, had now reached the seventeenth year of his age, and though little qualified to reign, mounted the throne without opposition. St. Odo, the archbishop of Canterbury, gave him the royal unction, and set the crown upon his head. Vicious by nature, and restrained by no principle of honor or religion, Edwi began on the very day of his coronation to show the nation how little he regarded his own dignity or that of his crown. The fact is related by William of Malmesbury, and Matthew of Westminster, but circumstantially by Osberne, a prebendary of Canterbury, and the writer of St. Dunstan's and St. Odo's life.

Among other females, who shared in the amors of Edwi, were a certain unmarried woman, his near relation, of high birth and beauty, by name Elgiva, and her grown up daughter, whose name those authors have not mentioned. These wanton Sirens, who, under the fairest features, concealed the foulest ebullitions of a corrupt heart, had so far captivated the prince's affection, as to give them hopes that they should at last inveigle him into a consent to marry one of them. Always upon the watch for an opportunity to try the power of their charms upon a lascivious youth, they were actually waiting for him in an adjoining room. Impatient of delay, Edwi abruptly rose from the table, and hastened to join them. Such behavior, on so solemn a day, shocked the nobles who were feasting with him. They looked at one another, they murmured, and in the end concluded that two of the company should go, in the name of the rest, and bring the king back. The disagreeable task being given by common consent to the abbot of Glastonbury

and his relation, Kinsey, the bishop of Litchfield, they immediately repaired to the room, where they found the king, without his crown, indecently lying between the mother and the daughter. To these the abbot first gave a stern rebuke for their lewd demeanor, then addressing himself to the king in a milder tone, he besought his Majesty to respect his royal character, and to return with him to his nobles, who anxiously expected the honor of his presence. Edwi grew red and angry at this intrusion of the deputies, and refused to stir: upon this, Dunstan, taking hold of his hand, raised him upon his feet, placed the crown upon his head, and conducted him back to the banqueting room, leaving Elgiva and her daughter to vent their rage and threats of revenge against him to one another.

This minute relation of a fact so scandalous in itself, and in all its circumstances, might be thought by some to be out of place, were it not that several of our first rated historians have most shamefully misrepresented it. With no other apparent view than to varnish vice, and to blacken the character of those eminent men, whom our ancestors have ever beheld with veneration, these writers pretend that Edwi, at the time of his coronation, was actually married to one of those two favorite ladies, and that his conduct on that occasion did not exceed the bounds of decorum. And what completes the barefaced insult which they offer to their readers, they cite the names of those original writers, Matthew of Westminster, William of Malmesbury, and Osberne, as vouchers for the facts, which in their genuine narrative are expressly contradicted. These ancient authors unanimously assert that neither Elgiva nor her daughter was then married, but that both had hopes of drawing in the king to marry one of the two. In the second place, they assert that the familiarities which passed

between the king and them both alternately, were illicit and incestuous. The decisive words of Ganea and Pellex, used by William of Malmesbury, can leave no doubt in the reader's mind: yet Carte, in his translation of the Latin text, has ventured to construe those words into Queen and Wife. These errors of Carte, Mr. Hume has transcribed, and added to others of his own. It is on the daughter, whom he calls Elgiva, that he presumes to lavish the titles of queen and wife, contrary to the very authorities he quotes. In a foregoing page the same ingenious writer entertains his readers with a romantic account of St. Dunstan, of the celibacy of the secular clergy, and of the Benedictine Order in England. The account contains almost as many falsehoods, as it has sentences.

Elgiva was not tardy in her revenge upon the guiltless abbot of Glastonbury. At her instigation, the king banished him out of the kingdom, under the pretence of abuses committed by him in the late reign. Not satisfied with this, he vented his resentment against the whole body of Benedictines; he confiscated their goods, turned them out of doors, and gave their monasteries to the married clergy. These acts of tyrannic violence fell not on the Monks alone; they were felt by his other subjects, who were less inclined to bear them. The northern and middle counties refused to acknowledge him any longer for their king, they renounced allegiance to him, and transferred it to Edgar, his younger brother. In other times such a revolt might have occasioned a civil war, then it had no other effect than a pacific division of obedience to two ruling powers.

Edgar, seeing himself peaceably acknowledged sovereign of the revolted counties, exercised all the rights of sovereignty over them. He considered the banished abbot of Glastonbury as his subject, and an injured man: knowing

well his merit and abilities to promote the public good, he called him home out of Flanders, where he passed a year in exile, made him one of his privy council, and soon after promoted him to the See of Worcester. St. Odo, the primate, performed the ceremony of his consecration.

St. Dunstan, so much famed for sanctity and talents in former ages, and now so vilely slandered in modern history, was born of noble parents in the county of Somerset: he received a literary and virtuous education in the monastery of Glastonbury, under certain Irish masters, who entered into possession of that house when the Monks were dispersed by the Danes. Upon the death of his parents, he inherited a plentiful fortune, which enabled him to found five religious houses. His rank, his abilities, and his family connections, for he was nephew to Athelm, the archbishop of Canterbury, and to Elphegus, the bishop of Winchester, recommended him to public notice very early in life. The kings, Athelstan and Edmund, called him to court, that they might profit by his counsels. There he remained, till perceiving himself envied and calumniated by jealous courtiers, he spontaneously quitted the palace, and retired to his uncle St. Elphegus at Winchester. The holy bishop advised him to renounce the vanities of a worldly life, and to consecrate himself solely to God in a religious state. The young man, who was then inclined to marry, resisted his uncle's advice for some time, but yielded in the end. The bishop gave him the monastic habit, and ordained him priest under the title of our Lady's Church at Glastonbury. Soon after his ordination, he went to serve his church, which was in a ruinous condition; near it he built himself a small oratory, and a cell only five feet long and two and half broad. There he passed his time like another Antony of Egypt, in the exercise of the monastic virtues, prayer, fasting,

watching, and manual work. King Edmund bestowed upon him all the ancient domains of that famous abbey, which had fallen to the crown. In consequence of this royal donation, he built a new, magnificent church, repaired the old abbey, and reduced it to a regular form. When the buildings were finished, he assembled a large community of scattered Monks, and was installed the nineteenth abbot from St. Brithwald, the first Englishman who governed that house. For the uniformity of domestic discipline in the Benedictine monasteries of England, St. Dunstan compiled what is called the Concord of Rules, which incorporates several old monastic customs with the rule of St. Bennet. In these religious employments the virtuous abbot passed his time, till banished by king Edwi in the manner related above. He was recalled by Edgar, made bishop of Worcester, and four years after, in 961, was translated to the metropolitan See of Canterbury. It had been offered to him no less than three times, and as often humbly refused by him. Nothing but the king's will, and the public voice of the people, induced him to accept it at last. Pope John XII., appointed him legate of the holy See.

SECTION IV.

Expulsion of Incontinent Clergy.

(A. D. 967.) THE death of unhappy Edwi, in 959, united England again into one kingdom under Edgar. The reign of Edgar, surnamed the Peaceable, is one of the most fortunate we meet with in the ancient English history. His capacity for the administration of affairs was superior to most. Though naturally inclined to peace, he showed no aversion for war, and so guarded was he against the attacks of a foreign enemy, that no hostile Dane presumed to molest the British shore. Edgar, having no external danger to apprehend, turned his mind to the correction of those internal disorders, which had long disgraced religion and the state. To repair the ruined monasteries, to revive the Benedictine Order, to remove the scandal of clerical concubinage, and to restore the chaste discipline of ancient times, was the religious ambition of King Edgar. It was a laudable undertaking, and although likely to meet with strong opposition, he was determined not to desist till he had completed it, on which so much good depended. He had an archbishop, vested with spiritual powers, and endowed with talents, ready to concur with him, and to bring the matter to a happy issue. The undertaking being so very opposite to the principles which animated the first reformers of the sixteenth century, we are not to be surprised at the invectives, misrepresentations, slanders, and falsehoods, which we find in a Parker, a Godwin, a Jewel, a Fox, a Speede, and most other protestant writers, when they mention the subject of religion. The earliest writers amongst them have penned down their own fictions for historical facts, their successors repeat them upon credit

without further examination, and the calumny is thus handed down under the odious name of Popery, till it is generally thought to be true. Carte bitterly inveighs against St. Dunstan and the monks, because he hated them; Hume, the servile train bearer of Carte, in all his ancient history has copied his abuse because he hated religion. These authors acknowledge St. Dunstan to have been in universal repute for his holiness of life, but this they attribute to the sanctified cunning which they say he practiced in concealing his violent ambition from the eyes of the vulgar. They scarce allow him so much as a single virtue, they throw a veil of hypocrisy over his most religious actions, they ridicule his piety, they ascribe his works of penance to base motives; Mr. Hume acknowledges his canonization, but declares his name to be a disgrace to the Roman calendar. The assertion is bold indeed, but it indicates no proof, that the author of it had received any special lights from heaven, which enabled him to tell us what passed in the heart of St. Dunstan, and to discover, even in his best actions, such vicious motives as no one in the course of eight hundred years had ever hinted at.

Mr. Hume is a popular author; his history is put into the hands of youth; his assertions are positive, his style seducing; his page is decorated with the show of ancient names, of an Osberne, an Ingulf, a William of Malmesbury, a Matthew of Westminster, the Saxon Chronicle; hence the unsuspecting reader fancies that nothing is there advanced but on respectable authority; but upon examination he would find, that by the help of false constructions, and the mutilation of sentences, these ancient authors are brought forward as vouchers for the very contradictory of what they have written. Reader, beware how you give credit to a writer who has thus artfully employed his talents to

deceive you in points the most interesting for you to be faithfully informed of. By this enlightened Mr. Hume, we are gravely told, "that before St. Dunstan's time, the bishops and parochial clergy lived apart with their wives and families; the monks had hitherto been a species of secular priests, who lived in the convents after the manner of the present canons or prebendaries, not subjected to the rigid rules of an Order, bound by no rule of obedience, and still retaining the choice, without quitting the convent, either of a married or a single life; that the Roman Pontiff was making rapid advances towards an universal sovereignty over the ecclesiastics, and had undertaken to make all the clergy throughout the western world, renounce at once the privilege of marriage; that celibacy then began to be extolled, as the indispensable duty of priests, and that an additional force was bestowed on this argument by the doctrine of transubstantiation, which was now creeping in; that a mistaken piety had produced in Italy a new species of monks, called Benedictines, and that Dunstan imported into England this new order of monks, who so much changed the state of ecclesiastical affairs."

A great deal of strange matter is here compressed into a narrow compass without the least ingredient of truth. If Mr. Hume, at the time he wrote, did not know, he should at least have informed himself before he wrote, that the Benedictine was no new Order, that it had existed above four hundred years, that St. Austin and his companions, who first announced the Christian religion to the English Saxons, were monks of the Benedictine Order; that the monasteries in England, from the period of its conversion to the time of St. Dunstan and long after, were solely founded for and occupied by Benedictine monks; that except the monks of Bangor, whose rule we are not

acquainted with, the island of Great Britain had not yet received amongst its religious establishments any monks but those who professed the rule of St. Bennet; that no such species of monks, as he describes, living in community without vows, without subordination, and with wives, if they chose it, was ever seen in England or in the church of Rome; that it was no ancient privilege, but an abuse for churchmen in holy orders to contract marriage; that ignorant indeed, or shameless must be the man, who, in contradiction to the Fathers, to the canons and councils of the Church, asserts that such a privilege ever existed; that upon historical record, the rule of celibacy for the clergy, and the doctrine of Transubstantiation, are coeval with the apostolic age; that in the West, the rule of celibacy has always been in force, and was so in the East, till the stray synod of Trullus, in 692, permitted the subdeacons, deacons, and priests of Greece to live with the wives they had lawfully married before their ordination. This new permission of the synod in Trullo manifestly proves the ancient prohibition. But the relaxation itself was introduced under certain restraints, which rendered it less desirable. For the same synod that sanctioned the uxorious innovation, strictly forbids all clergymen, in high orders, to marry after their ordination, and all bishops to cohabit with the wives they had taken before their ordination.

The oriental indulgence was never received in the West, where the primitive discipline was wisely retained, as it is to this day. The discipline is justly styled primitive; for history furnishes us with no decree or ordinance of the Church to give it a beginning; all the regulations made upon the subject from the earliest times, found it already existing, and they only tend to preserve its existence unprofaned, and to punish the violation of it. In a synod held by St. Gregory the Great, anathema is pronounced against any priest

or deacon who shall presume to marry. Spelman's collection of English councils exhibits many similar ordinances, sanctioned by the civil as well as by ecclesiastical powers; yet John Fox, with the same unblushing impudence as he published his acts of fabricated martyrs, gravely assures us that the marriage of priests was forbidden by no law before the reign of Pope Gregory VIII., 1073.

In and before the reign of Edgar, the licentiousness of the secular clergy was grown to an enormous height, not only amongst those who had seized upon the abandoned monasteries, but also amongst the canons and beneficed clerks. Archbishop Parker calls them pious and devout priests, lawfully married; but it does not appear that they thought so themselves; for though they cohabited with their women as if they had been their wives, yet they considered them as mere concubines, whom they discarded at pleasure to make room for others. Such at least is the account which Harpsfeld, Capgrave, Reyner, and the annals of Winchester give of them: and their account is confirmed by the speech of King Edgar to the bishops, whom he had called together to deliberate with him on the means of putting an end to those flagrant scandals.

The king begins by reminding the assembled prelates of the sacred nature of those religious foundations, which his pious ancestors had formed to promote the service of God, and the salvation of men. "These sacred foundations," says he, "we now see sacrilegiously wasted by dissolute churchmen upon their dogs, their birds and concubines. In vain have you expostulated, exhorted, and rebuked. The houses of the clergy are become the seats of riot and intemperance, the resort of libertines, of singers, of buffoons. The people murmur, all good men are scandalized. The evil increases, efficacious remedies must be applied. The

sword of St. Peter is in your hands ; I wield that of Constantine. The spiritual power is yours ; the civil mine. The joint exertion of both is necessary to suppress the present insults offered to religion, to banish vice, and to purify the polluted altar of God. Unclean intruders have taken possession of the sanctuary ; it is time they should be compelled to quit their concubines or their livings. Too long have they bid defiance to the laws, and all lawful authority. But still let justice be tempered with humanity ; let us give encouragement to repentance ; we offer them the choice either to submit to the chaste and ancient discipline of the Church, or to relinquish their ecclesiastical possessions." The king's speech was received with applause, and the measure he proposed was unanimously adopted. When the proposal of reform was made to the delinquents, many of them seriously repented, and retained their livings. But many more who refused to relinquish their sinful habits, were consequently expelled, and their benefices bestowed on more worthy subjects. From this epoch we find many of our cathedral churches were served by canons of the Benedictine Order. St. Dunstan successfully employed his interest and his zeal in repairing and re-peopling the great abbies that had fallen into ruin ; so that he is generally looked upon as the principal restorer of canonical and monastic discipline over all England. St. Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester, and St. Oswald, archbishop of York, had no small share with him in the meritorious work ; they likewise share in the virulent abuse which the abettors of a different reformation in the sixteenth century most liberally bestowed upon them.

SECTION V.

Fall and Penitence of King Edgar.

(A. D. 969.) KING EDGAR, at the very time that he exerted his authority against the incontinent clergy of England, was laboring under the performance of a heavy penance for a crime of the like nature. For although Edgar bore the character of a virtuous prince, yet he carried about him a domestic enemy that betrayed him, as it did David heretofore, into the foul sin of adultery. The fact is not dissembled by the writers of those times, though related by them in a very different manner from the account which our modern historians give of it. Mr. Hume, who expresses a strong resentment against Edgar for what he had done against the incontinent clergy, and who, in flat terms, represents him as a licentious hypocrite, and a violator of every human and divine law, endeavors to impose upon his readers, by referring them to Osberne, as a voucher for the truth of his narration, though contradicted by that very author in almost every circumstance, as he might have seen. "Edgar," says the Scotch historian, citing Osberne for his authority, "broke into a convent, carried off Editha, a nun, by force, and committed violence on her person: for this act of violence and brutality he was reprimanded by Dunstan, and obliged, not to separate from his mistress, but to abstain from wearing his crown during seven years." Osberne relates the fact in the following manner: "On a certain time, King Edgar came to a convent of nuns at Wilton; and there being captivated with the beauty of a young lady, who was there for her education, among others who had not received the veil,* desired

* *Inter non velatas nutritur.*

to have some conversation with her apart. She, under an apprehension that the king might possibly have some wicked intention in demanding this private interview, took from one of the nuns as she went along, a religious veil, and put it upon her own head, as a safeguard against any indecency that the king might offer. The king seeing her enter the room with a veil over her face, how suddenly, says he, are you become a nun, and against her will snatched the veil from her head. He then led her off, and gratified his passion with the loss of her honor. This happened a little before the death of Elfeda, or Ethelfeda, his first wife, in 962, and occasioned great scandal when it became public. St. Dunstan, being informed of the fact, watched a favorable opportunity of going to court, and, like another Nathan, reproved the king for his sin in strong but respectful terms. The king stood silent for some time, then casting himself at the archbishop's feet, with great marks of repentance, confessed his sin, and begged to be absolved. The archbishop, judging of his interior disposition by the external signs he gave of sincere repentance, gave him absolution, but enjoined him a seven year's penance. The king humbly accepted and faithfully performed it, with the spontaneous addition of other penitential works," as Osberne testifies. The penance enjoined him by St. Dunstan was, that he should not wear his crown for seven years to come, that he should fast two days in the week during that term, that he should give large alms, and found a convent for the reception of religious virgins. After having performed a penance of this kind, is it candid, or is it charitable to accuse the penitent Edgar of hypocrisy in his humiliation? Edgar had sinned like David, and like David he repented of his sin.

But, says Mr. Hume, Edgar reconciled himself with the church without separating from his mistress. Osberne

expressly tells us that the king received absolution from the archbishop; the king therefore gave satisfactory tokens of a true repentance, by expressing his sorrow for the past, and making an unfeigned promise of amendment for the future. Without this real conversion of the heart, which includes a serious resolution to avoid not only sin, but the occasions of sin, no absolution can be of any avail to the sinner, as the king knew, as St. Dunstan knew, and as every Catholic knows, who knows his catechism. To ascertain the real circumstances that accompanied Edgar's fall and repentance, it is necessary to consult those very authors whom Mr. Hume so fondly names as vouchers for his own representation of the fact. Osborne says, the king, having received absolution, punctually performed his seven year's penance; to which might be added many other works of piety, that he might appease the wrath of God.* Matthew of Westminster, William of Malmesbury, and Capgrave inform us, that the young lady whom Edgar violated was then no nun,† that her name was Wulfrith, not Editha, that she became pregnant from her criminal connection with the king, that she brought forth a daughter named Editha, that the king, after the death of his first wife, Elfleda, proposed to marry her, but that she, as soon as recovered from her lying-in, chose henceforward to live chaste and penitent, retired into the convent of Wilton, and took the veil of religion from the hand of St. Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester. Her daughter, Editha, likewise made herself a nun afterwards in the same house, and there died a Saint. Mr. Hume continues to indulge in his wanton imagination in relating two other scandalous stories of Edgar, on the pretended authority of William of Malmesbury, as true facts;

* Vid. Spelman's Council, page 481.
nialem fuisse. Majm. 1. 2.

† Quam certum est non tunc Sanctimo-

although that author relates them as mere reports, maliciously invented to asperse the character of that illustrious king.

A respect for royalty and for truth would not suffer those ancient authors to charge Edgar's frailty with crimes which did not belong to him. They candidly relate the licentious sallies of a sinful passion which Edgar promiscuously indulged for near a twelve month, when he was happily reclaimed by the exhortations of St. Dunstan. Being then a widower, by the death of his queen Elfreda, he married Elfrida, the spirited and ambitious daughter of the Earl of Devonshire, who bore him two sons, Edmund and Ethelred. The first died an infant, the second became king, and reigned six and thirty years. Edgar died in 975. Elfrida tried to place her own son Ethelred upon the throne, to the prejudice of prince Edward, the son of Edgar by his first queen Elfreda. Her intrigues with a seditious party did not then succeed. The bloody knife more effectually served her horrid purpose four years afterwards. She resided at Corfe Castle, in Dorsetshire. The king was one day taking the diversion of the chase in that neighborhood, and being thirsty, rode to the castle for a refreshment, unarmed and unattended. The most poignant jealousy of an ambitious step-mother instantly awoke in the heart of Elfrida. In Edward she beheld the only bar that hindered her darling Ethelred from being king. She had him now in her power. But she covered her rancor with expressions of kindness, and courteously invited him in: which he not accepting, a refreshment was brought him, and as he put the cup to his lips, one of the servants stepped forward and gave him a mortal stab. He dropped from his horse and expired upon the ground.

Thus Edward, in the seventeenth year of his age, and the fourth of his reign, fell a sacrifice, not to religion, but to the wicked ambition of his step-mother. The innocence of this prince's life, his purity of manners, his tender piety, and zeal for religion in its primitive chastity, have distinguished him among our English Saxon kings; he is known by the name of Edward the Martyr.

Great disorders still existed within the realm. Notwithstanding the exertions of Edgar to bring back the concubinary clergy to their duty, they still made an obstinate resistance, in which they received powerful protection from some of the nobility. Elfer, earl of Mercia, openly espoused their cause, and put them in possession of the monasteries within his jurisdiction, from whence he had expelled the monks. He was one of Elfrida's wicked advisers, and acted by her authority. God in his mercy was pleased at length to touch both their hearts with remorse. The earl, with sincere regret, lamented the unjust proceedings he had been guilty of against the church, and died a Christian penitent. Elfrida founded two convents for women, in one of which she took the veil, and spent the remainder of her days in the most fervent acts of devotion and penance.

SECTION VI.

Extinction of the Carlovingian race of Kings.

(A. D. 987.) THE imbecility of Charles the Simple, and the independent spirit of a turbulent nobility, threw France into civil dissensions. Some of the most powerful lords confederated against their lawful sovereign, whom they declared to be both unfit and unworthy to govern. On revolutionary principles, which have gained ground to a very alarming extent since that time, they resolved to transfer the crown to a prince, who had talents to support its dignity, and to maintain its rights. They cast their eyes upon Rodulphus, the political Duke of Burgundy; they placed him upon the throne, in the room of Charles, whom the faction confined in prison till he died, in 929. Rodulphus was acknowledged king by the nation, over which he peaceably reigned, without a competitor, as long as he lived. Charles, the Simple, was married to the princess Eguina, a daughter of our king Edward the Elder, and by her had a son, called Lewis. The queen, seeing her husband dethroned, and trembling for the safety of her son, only four years old, escaped with him into England, where she found protection in the court of king Athelstan, her brother. At the death of Rodulphus, in 936, the lords of France invited Lewis to return from England, and to take possession of his hereditary kingdom. Lewis, from his long residence beyond sea, obtained the surname of D'outremer, reigned eighteen years, and left behind him two sons, Lothaire and Charles, Duke of Lorraine. Lothaire succeeded his father, reigned thirty-two years, and was succeeded by his son, Lewis V. Lewis, a weak prince, after a reign of two years, died without issue. Upon his death,

the crown, by hereditary right, devolved on Charles of Lorraine, his father's brother. But Charles had offended the lords of France; they once more broke the line of succession, and called their favorite Hugh Capet, the active and intriguing Earl of Paris, to the throne. Duke Charles made a feeble effort to assert his right; but he fell by treachery into the hands of his competitor, who sent him prisoner to Orleans, and confined him for life. Hugh Capet was solemnly proclaimed king, universally acknowledged, and crowned by the archbishop of Rheims on the third of July, 987. With the elevation of Hugh Capet, ended the Carolingian line of kings in France. Hugh became the father of a new royal race, whose descendants, on the principle of hereditary right, swayed the sceptre of France in one continued line till the year 1791, when a levelling and anti-christian revolution overturned the whole frame of government, both in church and state, and threw the whole nation into a chaos of anarchy and democratical confusion.

Charles the Fat was the last French monarch who bore the title of emperor. Upon his death, in the year 888, the princes of Germany elected his nephew, Arnulf, for their sovereign, who soon after went to Rome, was crowned by the Pope, and took the title of emperor. From that time, oriental and occidental France became two distinct kingdoms, and were ever after governed by distinct sovereigns. The sovereigns of Germany were called kings or emperors, as they procured their coronation from the Pope. The ceremony of a papal coronation was thought to render his person more sacred and more respectable to his subjects, but it conferred no temporal power, as issuing from the Pope to the new crowned sovereign, who, previous to that ceremony, was considered to be in full possession of his temporal independence. Arnulf died in the year 899, and

left a son, called Lewis, who reigned twelve years with the title of King of the Romans. Dying without issue, in him was extinct the royal posterity of Charlemagne in Germany. In France it protracted a declining existence seventy-six years longer, as we have just stated, when it finally disappeared. The Germans, being now no longer associated with the French in the same empire, became their hostile rivals in power; they offered not the crown of Charlemagne to his only surviving heir, Charles the Simple, but requested Otho, Duke of Saxony, to accept it. Otho, on account of his advanced age, declined the honor, and recommended Conrad, Duke of Franconia, to their choice. Conrad reigned eight years as king of Germany. When he found himself drawing towards the end of life, he proposed for his successor Henry, 'the son of Otho, Duke of Saxony, as a prince the best qualified to govern the kingdom in those turbulent times. Henry, surnamed the Fowler, was accordingly elected king, and reigned seventeen years. By his queen, St. Mathilda, he had three sons, Otho the Great, his successor; Henry, Duke of Bavaria; and Bruno, who became bishop of Cologne, and a saint. Otho, at his accession, had a heavy war upon his hands. The Hungarians, a fierce and warlike people, had for some years past burst out of their confines and carried fire and sword through the adjacent provinces. They now renewed their hostilities with greater violence. They ravaged Franconia, Upper Germany and Gaul, as far as the ocean; they then broke into France, and penetrated into Italy.

Italy, from the end of the ninth century, as we have seen, was become the seat of faction and civil discord. The ecclesiastical state was kept in a long and disgraceful servitude by the ambition of rival senators, by the Marquises of Tuscany, and the Earls of Tusculum. By these petty

tyrants the patrimony of St. Peter was torn to pieces and sacrilegiously usurped. The Popes were not masters in their own capital. Raised by faction, as it happened, or by intrigue, they lost their personal respectability, were often insulted, imprisoned, and even murdered by the prevailing party. Two sister prostitutes, Marozia and Theodora, daughters of the lewd Marchioness of Tuscany, governed Rome by their political influence and criminal intrigues. To these disorders the Popes themselves contributed in no small degree. After Stephen VI., who died in 891, succeeded Formosus, Stephen VII., Romanus, Theodore II., John IX., Benedict IV., Leo V., Christophorus, Sergius III., Anastasius III., Lando, John X., Leo VI., Stephen VIII., John XI., Leo VII., Stephen IX., Martinus II., Agapetus II., John XII., Leo VIII., Benedict V., John XIII., Benedict VI., Donnus II., Benedict VII., John XIV., Boniface VII., John XV., Gregory V., Sylvester II. Between the years 891 and 999, here are one and thirty Popes; their number is a clear proof that the reigns of many of them were short, and their end dishonorable. Sergius III., exhibited a spectacle of scandal, of which the Christian world had never known an example, a sovereign pontiff clasped in the lewd embraces of a notorious prostitute. Sergius III., without regard for the dignity or the holiness of his pontifical character, publicly avowed his criminal connections with Marozia; by her, he had a son, who, under his mother's influence, crept afterwards into St. Peter's chair, by the name of John XI. To the infamy of his spurious birth, he added personal vice, in which he was shamefully imitated by many, who, in that century, were raised to the papal throne without the virtues to merit or support their elevation. Protestant writers here exult in the disgrace of the Roman pontiffs at that time, and wildly fancy, that in the papal dress, thus

defiled with vice, they behold the scarlet petticoat of the Babylonian harlot. These writers, instead of imitating the filial piety of Sem and Japhet, in drawing a cloak over their father's shame, as modesty would dictate, indecently laugh with Cham, and by dwelling with malignant pleasure upon vices incident to mortal men even in the most exalted stations of life, wantonly insult their mother church. The insult affects neither the truth nor the holiness of her doctrine. Those vices of her first pastors are merely personal; they are not the result of her belief. Her existence rests not on the personal merit of any man; it is founded on the power and promises of Christ, who has engaged his word to lead her into all truth, and to abide with her to the end of time. On such grounds her faith can never fail. But scandals will still happen; they are a natural consequence of the depravity of man's heart; when they happen within the sanctuary, they are grievous indeed: they are one of the many trials which the Christian Church has to undergo; they tend to tarnish the lustre of her virtues, and to shake, if it were possible, the foundation of her faith. Dark gathering clouds often cast a dismal gloom over the earth, and seemingly threaten to blot out the light of day; but the sun's glorious orb never ceases to shine in a sphere far above their reach, and as the clouds disperse, breaks out upon us with undiminished brightness. Such is the triumph of the church over all the temporary misfortunes that accidentally befall her.

SECTION VII.

View of the Tenth Century.

(A. D. 1000.) FROM the general decay of morality and learning, the tenth century is commonly accounted one of the dark ages of the Church. We have already given a cursory sketch of the devastations caused in England, France, Italy, Germany, and Spain, by the repeated incursions of the Danes, Normans, Hungarians and Saracens. Besides the calamities of foreign invasion, intestine broils and civil revolutions threw Italy, Germany, and France, into strange confusion. In the tumult of successive wars we have seen the seminaries of piety and learning overturned, monasteries and cities smoking in their own ruins, the schools abandoned, students and professors flying from the sword of barbarous invaders. Hence ensued a general decay of science, a disuse of literary improvement, a neglect of civil and ecclesiastical discipline, gross ignorance, and licentiousness of manners, in the highest ranks of society. But amidst all these disorders, that lay rankling in the very bosom of the Church, the Church preserved her doctrine untainted, her faith unaltered and immaculate. The efficacy of our blessed Saviour's prayer for St. Peter, that his faith might not fail,* was eminently conspicuous. In the iron age of Christianity, as Mr. Gibbon expresses it,† the triumphs of apostolic zeal were repeated. In the ninth, tenth, and eleventh centuries, the reign of the gospel and of the Church was extended over Bulgaria, Hungary, Bohemia, Saxony, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Poland, and Russia. A laudable ambition to extend the kingdom of Jesus Christ, excited the monks of Germany and Greece to

* Luke, c. xxii, v. 23.

† V. v, c. 55.

visit the tents and huts of barbarians in the northern and eastern regions of Europe. Their motive was pure and meritorious, their courage active and patient; poverty, hardships, and dangers, were the lot of those apostolic missionaries; a holy life, the force of truth, and the gift of miracles, were the only arms by which they conquered. The seeds of Christianity had been sown in Russia, as we have related in the foregoing century, but the conversion of the country is properly to be dated from the baptism of the great Duke Wolodomir, in 988.

This propagation of the gospel amidst the new converted nations of Europe may, in some measure, atone for the insults done to religion by her own degenerate children. But the fatherly providence of God, who desires the conversion, not the destruction of sinners, left not even these, notwithstanding their infidelities, without helps to repentance. He raised up amongst them zealous and holy men, who by word and work sought to retrieve them from evil. In England we have seen St. Dunstan and his episcopal coadjutors, under the vigorous support of Edgar, successfully laboring in the reform of a corrupt clergy. In Germany we find St. Bruno, the learned archbishop of Cologne, and brother of Otho, redressing the abuses which an iniquitous age had introduced. To put a stop to the disorders that reigned in Italy, Otho went thither at the head of his army, in the year 962. He was received in Rome with loud acclamations by the clergy and people, and solemnly crowned emperor by the Pope, John XII., who had invited him to come. Strange irregularities and uncanonical proceedings had for some years back attended the election of a new Pope. John himself had been elected when only eighteen years of age. To prevent all such irregularities in future, certain regulations were proposed and adopted,

though with little effect, as the event showed, towards obtaining the main point. Respecting the imperial election, two maxims were then established, first, That the prince elected in the German diet, should from that instant be acknowledged sovereign of the kingdoms of Italy and Rome; second, That he could not legally assume the title of emperor before he was crowned by the Roman Pontiff. Otho, now vested with the imperial crown and title, issued a public mandate for the restoration of all lands and property, which had any ways been dismembered and usurped from the holy See. He had a respectable army at hand, and was instantly obeyed. This done, he confirmed by a solemn deed the former grants of Pepin and Charlemagne, under the same limitation of reserving to himself and heirs the supreme jurisdiction in civil matters over the Roman state and its dependencies, by the right of appeal. Otho died in 973. His victories, his activity, his magnificence, his justice, and religious virtues, have gained him the surname of Great. His son and grandson, both of the same name, swayed the imperial sceptre in succession after him.

In the beginning of the tenth century, France beheld the famous monastery of Cluni, the seminary of many learned and holy men, rise in the county of Macon, within the dutchy of Burgundy. William, the good duke of Aquitain, wishing to testify his gratitude to God for the ample possessions he was master of, dedicated a part of them to pious uses; and, among other acts of religious liberality, founded the house of Cluni as an asylum for the reception of such as might choose to serve God in holy solitude, free from the cares and temptations of a corrupt world. The first monks of this monastery, twelve in number, formed a particular congregation, under the direction of their own abbot, Beron. They followed the rule of St. Bennet in its full rigor.

For regularity, for zeal, for learning, and the spirit of piety, the community of Cluni soon grew into repute, and excited many to an imitation of the same pious plan of evangelical perfection. The institution spread through France into Belgium and Lorrain, and greatly contributed to the revival of letters and reform of manners among the clergy.

CENTURY XI.

SECTION I.

England again invaded by the Danes.

(A. D. 1012.) THE Danes, whose appetite for plunder was not satiated, ventured again to visit the English coast, where they had great booty and little resistance to expect. In them nothing but the impulse of human passions appeared to be the spring of action; but in the secret designs of Providence they were the instruments of divine justice to chastise a degenerate and dissolute people. The young Ethelred had stepped into the throne over the dead body of his murdered brother; the queen dowager, his mother, had pointed the bloody knife against the beloved Edward; she encouraged the refractory clergy, and countenanced a public violation of the laws, to strengthen her own power.

In this posture of affairs, a small body of Danes landed upon the southern coast of England, to reconnoitre rather than to attack the country; they raised some contributions, and went off unmolested. Emboldened with success, they returned, not long after, in greater numbers, penetrated into the interior of the kingdom, and committed sad outrages. The ancient spirit of the nation seemed to be extinct. The nobles were disunited; none were disposed to risk their fortunes or their lives to support a government equally weak and unpopular; the idea of repelling force by force was abandoned; recourse was had to money. For the sum of ten thousand pounds, the plunderers agreed to evacuate the country and to return home. Peace, thus procured, was

not so much a cessation from present hostilities, as an encouragement for future aggressions. The Danes so understood it: within the lapse of a few years they returned no less than three times with fresh forces, fresh insolence, and fresh demands. No part of the kingdom was safe from their incursions; their depredations were cruel, their exactions enormous. The nation became in a manner tributary to those fierce invaders. The sums required to purchase their departure were raised by a heavy and disgraceful tax, under the title of *Danegelt*.

The calamities of those times have furnished matter for the most violent invectives against the memory of king Ethelred, as the guilty cause of them all, though in many of them during his minority he could have no share. Historians, without sufficient ground for their assertions, load his character with almost every kind of vice and cruelty. Though not endowed with that martial prowess and activity of mind which many of his royal predecessors had displayed, yet he was by no means destitute of merit; and had he reigned in less troublesome times, or had he been better served by those whom he was forced to employ, Ethelred might have had the reputation of a virtuous and pacific prince. In the history of his life no sufficient foundation appears to justify the harsh censures which those authors lavish on him. No private vice, no domestic irregularity, no conjugal infidelity, no public abuse of power, is proved against him. It was Ethelred's misfortune not to be beloved by his subjects; but greater still was his misfortune to be surrounded by traitors and cowards, while a ferocious enemy was preying upon the very vitals of his kingdom. Yet, under these discouraging circumstances, Ethelred did not abandon either himself or his people. He equipped a strong fleet, set a powerful army on foot, put

himself at their head, and marched against the enemy. But cowardice and treachery robbed him of the success which his exertions deserved. Some of his lieutenants in the counties betrayed his counsels to the Danes, with whom they kept a close correspondence, while his officers in command turned their backs upon the enemy in the field of battle and refused to fight. It is ungenerous and unjust to criminate an unfortunate monarch, as those authors do, for misfortunes of which he was the victim, and not the cause.

Seeing how little reliance was to be had upon his own faithless subjects, Ethelred had sought to strengthen himself by a foreign alliance with Richard II., the potent duke of Normandy. Being a widower by the death of his queen Elgiva, he offered to marry Emma, the duke's sister, hoping, by that connection with a Danish race, to fence himself against the insults of a Danish invasion. The marriage took place in 1002, the very year in which the Danish massacre is said to have been perpetrated by Ethelred's order. That Ethelred could be so destitute of humanity and of sense as to think of celebrating his marriage with a princess of Danish descent, by the slaughter of every Dane within the realm, is not credible, nor does the execution of such an order, had it been given, appear to have been even practicable. The discordant accounts given of it by different writers, clearly show that they had no certain grounds to go upon. Some pretend that the bloody scheme was planned by Ethelred himself, and that he despatched letters through all England for its execution on the same day, upon every Dane, without distinction of age or sex; others relate, that he only consented to it at the suggestion of Huna, the general of his army. By such an execution, great part of Mercia, Eastanglia, and Northumberland, chiefly inhabited by the colonial Danes,

must have been depopulated. They were too intimately connected with the English to be kept wholly ignorant of the design, too widely spread to be unawares, and too numerous to be butchered all in one day. With greater probability it is thought that some of those discontented Danes, whom Alfred had settled in the country, may have suffered military execution for treason or sedition, to which they had always shown themselves inclined.

Ethelred reaped not the advantage he expected from his alliance with the Duke of Normandy. Pressed as he was, with difficulties on every side, he assembled the prelates and nobles of the realm to deliberate with him upon the best means of rescuing the sinking state from destruction. In that assembly many good regulations were sanctioned, for the benefit of church and state: to avert the scourge of heaven, inflicted by the Danes, it was ordained that a strict fast should, in future, be observed on every Friday, except when a festival concurred. This observance remained in force from that time, 1008, to the year 1777, when, for just reasons, it was abrogated by his late Holiness, Pius VI.

In the year 1013, Sweyn, the fierce and enterprising king of Denmark, landed on the English coast with a formidable army, and began a more destructive war than England had experienced since the days of Alfred. From the western point of Devonshire, to the eastern shore of Kent, the whole country was laid waste, the towns were plundered and burned. Canterbury suffered all the calamities that follow the rueful fate of being taken by storm. Elphege, the archbishop, presented himself before the conqueror to plead for his helpless flock; he pleaded without effect; his expostulations were sternly rejected; he had the merit and the glory of dying a martyr in the discharge of his pastoral

duty. The whole country was now in the utmost confusion. Queen Emma fled with her two sons, Alfred and Edward, into Normandy; the king, perceiving that he had as much to fear from his faithless subjects as from the common enemy, followed her soon after. Sweyn crossed the Thames, and marched into Eastanglia, where he had a strong party ready to join him. Death cut him short in the middle of his career, in 1014, and gave the English time to breathe awhile from the ravages of war. Ethelred returned from Normandy, and made some weak efforts to restore order in the state. But the difficulties he had to struggle with, surpassed his abilities. In the following year, Canute, the son and successor of Sweyn, came over with fresh troops; Ethelred led his army to oppose him; treachery defeated his attempts. Edric, the powerful and perfidious earl of Mercia, who had long carried on a secret correspondence with the Danes, threw off the mask and joined the Danish standard. This gave a fatal blow to the royal party. The desponding king quitted the field, and shut himself up in his metropolis, where he died in 1016.

SECTION II.

Edmund Ironside and King Canute.

(A. D. 1016.) THE unfortunate Ethelred, who, by his mother's crime, had obtained the crown, left it in very disadvantageous circumstances to be struggled for by Edmund, his son, the issue of his first marriage with Elgiva. Edmund, who, on account of his bodily strength, is surnamed Ironside, hastened to the north, where his rival was carrying

every thing before him. Canute now no longer fought for a temporary tribute, or for plunder, but for sovereignty itself. The English in that part of the kingdom favored his pretensions. Edmund soon perceived that resistance was useless in a country which had either submitted, or was ready to submit to a foreign master. The southern counties remained steady in their attachment to the Saxon race of kings. Edmund roused them to arms, and led them against his enemy. The nation was thus divided into two contending parties. The middle and northern counties acknowledged Canute for their king, the west and south stood firm in their allegiance to Edmund. The two rivals being equally animated, and equally eager to bring the contest to a speedy issue, were equally forward to try their strength in the field. Much blood was spilled in a very short time; nothing was decided. To spare the effusion of English blood, it was proposed and agreed that the two competitors should decide the quarrel by single combat. They accordingly met in the small island of Alney, which divides the current of the river Severn, near Gloucester. Innumerable spectators crowded along the banks in anxious suspense for the event on which a crown depended. The two royal combatants seemed a match for each other; they were both in the vigor of youth, in dexterity and strength of body equally conspicuous. The struggle was long and obstinate, neither being inclined to own himself conquered. Canute at last proposed a compromise, which Edmund accepted. They agreed to divide the kingdom between them. A line of partition was drawn, the sword was sheathed, and civil discord ceased. But Edric, the perfidious earl of Mercia, being wholly devoted to the Danish interest, had taken his resolution not to see the power of England weakened by a division of territory between two sovereigns.

To complete all his former treasons against his native sovereign, he procured the assassination of Edmund, before he had reigned a month. Canute, upon this, was acknowledged king by the whole nation.

Canute was an active prince, no less politic than brave. Policy put him upon measures to secure the crown which his bravery had won. Edmund, his late antagonist, had left two sons, Edmund and Edward; and though they were then two young to form or to head a party against him, yet he apprehended the time might come when their presence and the claim of hereditary right might chance to shake his throne. He thought their presence could not fail of keeping up a spirit of opposition to the Danish government, and of stimulating a desire in the English to see the old Saxon race restored. He was sensible that the ravages of war, rather than an attachment to his person, had induced the English to receive him for their king. By profitable experience, he had learned that the English nobility, at that time, were not to be relied on; that they might as readily play the same game against him as they had done for him, and were as capable of betraying him as they had their native sovereign, should the temptation be suffered to remain amongst them. The odious Edric, who had murdered the father, advised the murder of his sons, Canute did not disapprove the advice, but he was afraid of shocking his new subjects by its execution in England. He therefore sent them to his friend and ally, the king of Sweden, whom he instructed to see they were speedily despatched. The Swede, who had a horror of shedding innocent blood, sent them into Hungary, where he concluded they would be as much out of the way of giving any future trouble to Canute, as if they were really dead.

Hungary was at that time governed by king Stephen, who reigned from the year 997, to the year 1038. Why William of Malmesbury calls him Solomon, no reason can I find, after a diligent research. His account is certainly far from being accurate. The Hungarian king, whom he calls Solomon, is known in other histories by the name of St. Stephen. William, of Malmesbury, says he was married to Gisela, the daughter of St. Henry, the emperor; he should have said the sister of St. Henry, for Henry never had a daughter; by mutual consent he lived in perfect continence with the empress St. Cunegunda, whom he left, as he declared in his last illness, as pure a virgin as he had received her. The king of Sweden therefore sent the two English princes to St. Stephen, king of Hungary, who took them under his protection, and gave them a princely education in his palace. Edmund, the eldest, who is also called Edwin and Edwi, died without issue; Edward, the youngest, surnamed the Outlaw, married Agatha, the Queen of Hungary's sister, and consequently the sister of St. Henry, the emperor. The issue of this marriage was one son, Edgar Atherling, and two daughters, Christina and Margaret; the first made herself a nun at Winchester, the second married Malcolm III., king of Scotland; both the sisters have a place among the Saints.

SECTION III.

Coronation of Edward the Confessor.

(A. D. 1043.) FROM the two distant sons of Edmund Ironside, Canute had no further apprehensions: but there were two other Saxon princes nearer home, Alfred and Edward, the sons of king Ethelred, by Emma, who gave him great uneasiness. These princes, with their mother, were in Normandy, under the protection of the duke, their uncle. To guard against the danger that might spring from thence, the political Dane made proposals of marriage to Emma, and, in order to gain the duke's consent, promised to settle the crown of England upon the issue he might have by that marriage. The insidious proposal was acceded to, notwithstanding the dishonor and injustice which accompanied it. Richard approved the contract, and Emma consented to marry the man who had dethroned her first husband, and proscribed his race: she agreed to see the children of her former marriage unjustly disinherited; she left them in Normandy, went to England, and gave her hand to Canute, indifferent, as it seems, whether a Briton or a Dane swayed the sceptre, as long as she were queen.

Canute's next concern was to reconcile the English to his government, which he tried to do by every popular act in his power. He lessened the expenditure of public money, by sending back into Denmark as many of his expensive followers as he could spare with safety, and incorporated the rest with the English natives. In a general assembly of the states he confirmed the ancient laws of the land, which he took care to have strictly observed, making no distinction between English and Danes in the execution of

public justice; he ratified all their national customs, and to convince them that he was no friend to treason, he inflicted condign punishment on all those who had betrayed their former sovereign to serve him. Edric, the infamous earl of Mercia, had boasted of being the author of king Edmund's murder, to promote the interest of Canute; Canute, for his just recompense, ordered his head to be struck off, and his body to be thrown into the Thames.

Canute, by these means, having secured his power in England, sailed to Denmark, where the king of Sweden had attacked him. He returned victorious, and in a second expedition attacked and subdued Norway. He had now attained the summit of his ambition, but still was not satisfied within himself. Christian sentiments, which he had imbibed in his youth, kindled in his soul that restless desire of something more, which no earthly pursuits can allay or gratify. His success in war, the pride of conquest, the extent of dominion, and the adulation of smiling courtiers, could not make him happy. He cast his view towards that future existence, in which alone the cravings of an immortal soul can be fully satiated. He endeavored to make reparation for some of the many evils which he had brought upon the English nation. The last six years of his life shine with Christian deeds, and, as far as the building of churches, the endowment of monasteries, and the foundation of chantries, can atone for the crimes of unjust aggression and usurpation of another's kingdom, have stamped upon his memory the character even of sanctity. He made a pious pilgrimage to Rome, but we do not find that he made any reparation whatever to the royal family, which he had so barbarously injured. The crown of England he considered as his own by right of conquest. After a successful reign of nineteen years, he died at Shaftsbury

in 1035, leaving three sons behind him, Hardicanute, by Emma, Sweyn and Harold by a former wife; Harold succeeded him, to the prejudice of Hardicanute, and reigned four years, without credit to himself or benefit to his subjects. Dying without children, he left the succession open to his half-brother, Hardicanute. This prince, at the end of two years, was suddenly carried off by an act of intemperance in 1042, and with him ended the royal race of Denmark in England.

The Danish conquest had caused an interruption of about six and twenty years in the Saxon line of succession. The English wished to see it restored. The sudden death of Hardicanute, without issue, opened a fair opportunity, which they resolved not to let slip. The nobles assembled and deliberated on the subject of their choice. They agreed to offer the crown to Edward, the only surviving son of Ethelred and Emma, and half-brother to Hardicanute. Edward was then in Normandy; Godwin, the potent earl of Kent, was deputed, by universal consent, to make him an offer of the crown, which after some hesitation, Edward accepted. The elevation of this amiable prince to the throne of his ancestors diffused general joy through the nation: on Easter-day, in the year 1043, he was crowned and anointed king, by Edsius the archbishop of Canterbury.

SECTION IV.

Greek Schism.

(A. D. 1053.) AFTER the disgrace of Photius, the prime mover of the Greek schism in 886, the Church of Constantinople enjoyed peace for some years. His immediate successor in the patriarchal See was Stephen, and after him Antony, a holy monk: both have a place in the Greek calendar. After the death of Antony, succeeded Nicholas, the emperor's secretary, a man of pure morals, but inflexibly severe. No regard to persons, circumstances, or times, could ever induce him to depart from any rule of the Greek Church. The Greeks were averse to second marriages. Their ecclesiastical discipline subjected those who married a third time, to a rigorous course of canonical penance: fourth marriages were absolutely forbidden. Leo, the reigning emperor, having had the misfortune to lose three wives one after the other, without an heir to the crown, ventured upon a fourth marriage with Zoe; though he durst not acknowledge it at the time. In the following year, 905, she brought him a son, whom he wished to have solemnly baptised as his son and heir to the crown. The patriarch refused to comply, unless the emperor would solemnly promise to separate from the mother. He promised; the infant was christened with the usual ceremony; Zoe soon after appeared at court like an empress, and the nuptials were celebrated with great magnificence. Leo besought the patriarch to approve his marriage; the patriarch refused, for which he was deposed and banished Enthyimius, a man of probity, was put in his place: among the bishops, some approved, others disapproved &c

fact; a schism ensued. Leo died five years after, in 911, but the schism continued till the year 920.

Romanus Lacapenus, an intriguing courtier, had effected a marriage between his daughter and the young emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus, the son of Leo and Zoe. In consequence of this marriage, Constantine made him his colleague in the empire. Romanus, now vested with the purple, began very soon to assume a superiority over his son-in-law, removed Zoe from the palace into a convent, and restored the patriarch Nicholas. The subject of fourth marriages, which had caused the schism, was then discussed in a public assembly, and a decree formed under the direction of Nicholas, which absolutely rejected all fourth marriages as unlawful. The patriarch sent his decree to Rome for the Pope's approbation. There the matter rested; the desired approbation was never obtained. Nicholas died in 925, was succeeded by Stephen, the metropolitan of Amasce, who lived but two years after his translation to the patriarchal See; upon his demise, Tryphon, a monk, was ordained patriarch, on the condition that he should resign the dignity and power of governing that church, as soon as Theophylact, Romanus' son, was of an age to receive it. Five years after, Tryphon, according to agreement, retired to his convent, and Theophylact, at the age of sixteen, took upon him the sacred and important office of patriarch. He held it for three and twenty years, exhibiting to the world an equal display of vice and folly. The enormous expense which the keeping of two thousand horses put him to, forced him into the most criminal acts of simony: he had fixed his price for ordinations; he set up the bishoprics and church livings to public sale. By these scandalous and profane practices he continued to disgrace the mitre

till the year 956, when a contusion he received from one of his horses, by running against a wall, occasioned his death.

Constantine, who became sole master upon the death of Romanus, his haughty father-in-law, in 944, promoted Polieuctus, a learned and virtuous recluse, to the patriarchal chair. The emperor was a lover and promoter of science, which of late years had been neglected in the east as well as in the west. But he had unfortunately a son too greedy of power. Romanus the Younger, so called to distinguish him from his grandfather, procured poison to be administered to his father Constantine, who, in consequence, fell into a lingering state, and died in 959. The unnatural son enjoyed the fruit of his parricide only four years, and then died of a decay of nature, brought on by vice. He left two sons, Basil and Constantine; their tender age gave an opportunity to Nicephorus Bardas, an officer in the army, of creeping into the throne. To strengthen his authority, he married Theophania, the widow of Romanus, his predecessor, but gained not her affection. She resolved to despatch the man whom she could not love. For this purpose she procured an order for John Zimisques, who commanded the armies with signal success against the Bulgarians and Russians, to repair to Constantinople. He came; Nicephorus was murdered in his bed that very night, and Zimisques was proclaimed emperor in 969. After a reign of six years, he was carried off by poison, and the two sons of Romanus the Younger, Basil and Constantine, were acknowledged joint emperors. Basil reigned fifty years, famous for his victories over the Bulgarians, and died in 1025. His brother Constantine survived him three years, and reigned alone, a profligate and unprincipled prince through life. Being upon his death-bed, and given over by

his physicians, he sent for the patrician Romanus Argyropylus, and said to him, "Choose either to quit your wife, and to take one of my daughters with the imperial crown, or to have your eyes plucked out." Romanus was perplexed what to do. His wife, to free him from that perplexity, made herself a nun, falsely thinking that the bond of matrimony would be thereby dissolved. Zoe, one of Constantine's daughters, agreed to marry him; the mercenary patriarch Alexis gave him the nuptial benediction, and crowned him emperor. Zoe, soon after marriage, gave her affections to one Michael, a Paphlagonian money broker, whom she was determined to make her husband and emperor. For the accomplishment of her wicked purpose, she administered to her husband, Romanus, a dose of poison, which being slow in its operation, she instigated the Paphlagonian to despatch him in a quicker manner. He did so, and the patriarch Alexis, with the help of a bribe, joined the two murderers in the bands of wedlock. Michael reigned seven years, till the year 1041, when he abdicated the crown, and took the habit of a monk to do penance for his sins. He died the same year. Zoe then expected to have the sole direction of the empire; but for that she had neither talents nor authority. In the present situation of public affairs, she found it necessary to have an emperor; she recalled Constantine Monomachus from exile, made him emperor, and her third husband. Constantine was naturally gay and jovial, fond of pleasure and sensual enjoyments; the purple altered not his idle mode of life; so that government, instead of gaining strength by his promotion, became more and more languid, public order more and more neglected.

That so general a depravity of principle and morals, added to the strong antipathy which animated the Greeks against the Latins, should end in schism, is no matter of

surprise. From the time of Photius that antipathy had increased; their union hung by a slender thread, repeated symptoms of a final separation had appeared in the reigns of Nicephorus and Basil. Every thing seemed now ripe for the fatal event. The patriarch Alexis died in February, 1043, and the emperor immediately named Michael Cerularius to succeed him. Michael had worn the habit without the virtues of a monk. Violent by nature, he had been banished for attempts against the state; being raised to the patriarchal chair, he began by facts and writings to display his inveterate prejudices against the discipline and doctrine of the Latin Church. Inferior to Photius in talents and learning, though his equal in virulence and invective, he strangely misrepresented the history of past times to enforce his slanderous assertions against the Latin rite. He assumed the pompous title of universal patriarch, and condemned the Roman See as guilty of heresy, for holding that the Holy Ghost equally proceeds from the Father and the Son. Every thing seemed to portend an approaching schism. St. Leo IX., who was then Pope, did all in his power to prevent it. He appointed the celebrated Cardinal Humbert, with two other legates, to repair to Constantinople, and to confer with the patriarch Michael upon the points in dispute. The emperor received the legates with distinctive marks of honor and respect, the patriarch refused to see or communicate with them. The legates tried every lenient measure, till perceiving nothing could be done with a man so obstinately wrong, they drew up an act of excommunication against him, went with it into the great church of St. Sophia, and in the presence of the clergy and people laid it upon the altar, and immediately retired. In going out, they shook the dust from their shoes, according to the gospel injunction, then went to the palace,

took leave of the emperor, and quitted Constantinople. Soon after their departure, Michael published an act of excommunication against the bishop of Rome and the whole Latin church. This passed in the year 1053. From that epoch is dated the great schism between the Greeks and Latins, which continues to this day. By denying the procession of the Holy Ghost from God the Son, as well as from the Father, the Greeks add the crime of heresy to that of schism. Michael having declared himself the independent head of the eastern church, grew insolent against his sovereign. He consequently fell into disgrace, and was banished to the island of Proconesus, where he died in 1058.

SECTION V.

Revival of Discipline.

(A. D. 1055.) AFTER the death of Pope Silvester II., in 1003, the chair of St. Peter was filled by John, commonly called the Eighteenth, because John XV. having not been consecrated, and John XVI. being accounted an antipope. Some disagreement of authors has arisen in numbering the Johns. John XVIII. had for his successors John XIX., Sergius IV., Benedict VIII., John XX., Benedict IX., Gregory VI., Clement II., Damasus II., St. Leo IX., Victor II., St. Stephen X., Nicholas II., Alexander II., St. Gregory VII., Victor III., Urban II., Paschal II., in 1099.

When the limits of the eastern and western empires were settled between Charlemagne and Irene, the empress of Constantinople, the Italian dominions were divided.

Sicily, Apulia, and Calabria were assigned to the eastern empire, the rest to Charlemagne and his successor. The Saracens after that made frequent and successful descents from Africa upon the Sicilian and Italian coasts. The Greeks were too weak to offer any effectual resistance. The emperor, Otho I., marched an army into Italy in 962, as has been said, chastised the petty tyrants of the country, restored the ecclesiastical state to its former possessions, drove the Africans out of Calabria and Apulia, and by right of conquest laid claim to the territory they had occupied. That right the Greek emperor confirmed in favor of Otho II., upon his marriage with Theophania, the daughter of Romanus the Younger. The Saracens, unwilling to abandon their former conquests, returned to the attack, were joined by the perfidious Greeks, and expelled the Germans in their turn. They remained masters of that lower part of Italy for some years, till Tancred, a gallant Norman, arrived with a powerful army of adventurers, in 1008, and finally dispossessed both Greeks and Saracens. From that time the Norman chiefs became the dukes of Apulia and Calabria, to which they afterwards added Sicily, and all the lands that lie between Naples and the Roman territory.

Otho II., from whom the Greeks and Saracens recovered all that his father had conquered in Italy, reigned ten years, and dying in 983, left his son, Otho III., an infant four years old, in possession of the empire. This prince dying without children, in 1002, the imperial electors chose his cousin Henry, the duke of Bavaria, for his successor. Henry, by descent, was heir to the kingdom of Germany, being the great grand son of Henry the Fowler; he is known by the name of St. Henry. This religious king, for that was his title till crowned emperor at Rome, in 1014, being convinced, that God had invested him with temporal power for

no other purpose than to promote the happiness of his subjects, and the service of his Creator, turned his whole mind on those two important objects. For the correction of public vice, and the revival of ecclesiastical discipline, he roused the zeal of his bishops to concur with him in making such regulations as appeared suitable to the design. For the support of his crown, his maxim was to repel, never to provoke hostilities. When foreign invasion engaged him in war, he prosecuted it with vigor, in justice to his subjects : victory ever followed his banner. The troubled state of Italy required his presence ; he entered Rome in triumph ; Benedict VIII. set the imperial crown upon his head, in 1014. By an ample diploma, he confirmed the territorial donation made by his predecessors to the holy See, obliged the usurpers of its property to make restitution, and authorised the Norman adventurers to keep possession of the country, which they had wrested from the infidels. Equally prosperous and religious was the reign of this Christian emperor to his dying day, in the year 1024. Having lived in the habit of continency with his empress, Cunegunda, he left no issue. To the electors of the empire he recommended Conrad, the virtuous duke of Franconia, for successor to his earthly honors. Conrad was unanimously elected, and crowned at Rome by Pope John XX. In governing the empire he pursued the system of his predecessor, and thereby rendered his reign both honorable to himself and useful to his people. He died in 1039 ; his son, Henry III., surnamed the Black, a just and religious prince, succeeded him. Grief, at the sight of public calamities, to which he could discover no end, brought this pious emperor to the grave in the thirty-eighth year of his age, and the seventeenth of his reign. For his successor he left an infant son, five years old, Henry IV., unfortunately destined by divine permission to give fresh cause of affliction to all good men.

St. Peter's chair had for some time been occupied by a succession of unworthy prelates, the disgrace and shame of the pontificate, as we have noticed above. God suffered not the scandal to go on beyond a certain period. Those scandals, while they lasted, had dishonored the holiness, but had not altered the purity of the Church's doctrine. The holy See recovered its former lustre; ancient discipline revived. St. Leo IX., who was chosen Pope in the year 1049, eminently distinguished himself, both by word and work, in doing away the abuses of the age. Active and zealous to banish scandal from the sanctuary, he refused no labor, and shrunk from no danger where he thought his presence useful to religion. He visited France and Germany, assembled councils, exhorted and rebuked with all that apostolical authority which he judged conducive to the reformation of a depraved clergy. Incontinence and simony had taken deep root amongst them; vigorous measures were adopted and pursued to eradicate the evil, which, through length of time, and the influence of bad example, was become inveterate and almost general. When public vice is once grown so common as to be no longer accounted shameful, the life of one man, however strenuous his endeavors may be, is too short to effect a total change.

SECTION VI.

Heresy of Berengarius.

(A. D. 1060.) IN addition to the scandals which dishonored the Church in the tenth and eleventh centuries, a new heresy sprung up, never known or heard of in the first ages of Christianity. The east had hitherto been the prolific parent of spurious doctrines. Self-conceited dogmatists of Constantinople and Asia, at different periods, had advanced their blasphemous assertions against the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, and Jesus Christ the incarnate Son of God, but not one of them all had yet presumed to dispute the real presence of Christ's body in the holy Eucharist. Berengarius, archdeacon of Angers, and a native of Tours in France, was the first who publicly expressed his thoughts against the universal belief of that divine mystery. This churchman, possessed of no great talents, of some learning, and of no small vanity, taught in the public schools at Tours, about the year 1050. Lanfranc, a monk of the monastery of Bec, in Normandy, gave lessons of theology at the same time, with such applause that many flocked from different parts of France to hear him. Berengarius, piqued to see himself deserted by many of his hearers, hazarded some new positions to draw himself into public notice. They were chiefly three; the first was against infant baptism, the second against marriage which confined a man to one woman only, the third was against the real presence of Christ's Body in the holy Eucharist. His two first propositions were universally exploded at first hearing, and he said no more of them. The third gained some attention from a few of his hearers, who formed their judgment of revealed truths not by faith, but by outward forms and

appearances. Faith in this, as in all other divine mysteries which surpass the reach of human understanding, is grounded on the word of God: that word we receive by hearing,* not by seeing, not by the taste, not by the touch or smell. The words of Christ are express, *This is my Body, this is my Blood*;† they are so clear that no one can mistake the obvious sense and meaning of them; in that sense they had been universally understood by the faithful in all nations, for the first ten hundred years of the Catholic Church.

In opposition to this primitive and universal belief, Berengarius ventured to assert, that the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ were contained under the eucharistical forms of bread and wine in figure only, and not in reality. This figurative explanation of Christ's clear words, was so new and shocking to the faithful, that it gained but little credit. He then altered his tone, and had recourse to the unintelligible term of Impanation, which Martin Luther has since called Consubstantiation, as if the substance of our Lord's Body was blended and identified with the substance of bread in such a manner as both to be really present. These strange doctrines, unknown in the first ages of Christianity, being broached abroad, began to make a noise; the people were scandalized; the bishops, ever watchful against all innovation in matters of faith, took the alarm; in the year 1050, no less than three councils were held, at Verceil, at Paris, and Rome, to examine and discuss Berengarius' propositions upon the holy Eucharist. He was cited to defend or reject them; of the citation he took no notice, and to the charge of false doctrines his answer was, that he had taken them from a treatise of John Scot, and believed them to be true. All three councils were unanimous in condemning

* Rom. c. x.

† Mark, c. xiv.

the propositions, as contrary to faith. This John Scot was a native of Ireland, a smart philosopher, but no divine. He left his country to go into France, where he was well received by Charles the Bald, about the year 850. He composed a treatise, it seems, upon the holy Eucharist, which is now lost; it had never obtained any credit; it had sunk into oblivion, when Berengarius took it down from the dusty shelf, where it had lain for two hundred years, undisturbed, unnoticed, and unknown: but being then brought forth in defence of error, it was sentenced to the flames, and the opinion of Berengarius was pronounced heretical. These censures wounded the innovator's pride, but did not change his heart. He continued still to dogmatize, and by his insinuating manner he seduced many into error. Several councils were consequently held, in which his doctrine was repeatedly condemned. He went to Rome, in 1059, and there made a full retraction of his errors, according to the formulary delivered to him by Cardinal Humbert. But Berengarius was neither steady nor sincere. No sooner had he quitted Rome, than he wrote against his own retraction, and began to propagate anew his old heterodox opinions.

In the year 1079, St. Gregory VII. held a council in Rome, at which a hundred and fifty bishops assisted. Berengarius appeared before them, with full liberty to plead all he could in favor of his opinion. What the Catholic Church at that time believed on the subject of the holy Eucharist, there could be no doubt. Whether the Church had always believed the same, was then the question. To ascertain this point, recourse was had to the fathers and doctors of the Church, unexceptionable vouchers for what was taught and believed in their days. Ignatius,* who

*Epist. ad Smyr.

lived in the apostolic age, Justin¹ the Martyr, Irenæus,² Athanasius,³ Hilary,⁴ Cyril of Jerusalem,⁵ Chrysostom,⁶ the great Council of Nice, Ambrose,⁷ Austin,⁸ Jerom,⁹ Cyril of Alexandria,¹⁰ and others, their cotemporaries, give clear evidence that the belief in the real presence was the primitive belief of Christianity. Berengarius owned himself to have been deceived, threw his writings into the fire, abjured his error a second time, and pronounced his profession of faith before the council in the following form: "I, Berengarius, anathematize all heresies, and namely, that of which I stand accused. In word and heart, I sincerely hold and profess the faith which the Pope and Council prescribe concerning the Eucharist, according to the authority of the Gospel and the Apostle, to wit, That the bread and the wine, which are placed upon the altar, are by the powerful words of Jesus Christ substantially changed into the true Body and Blood of our Lord, so that after the consecration the same body is there really present which was born of the Virgin Mary, which was nailed to the cross, and is now seated in heaven, at the right hand of the Father. So help me God and his holy Gospel."

Berengarius having given this public satisfaction to the Church, returned in peace into France. His subsequent conduct has made it doubtful whether he was sincere in any of his retractions, which were generally followed by a relapse. It is, however, thought that he at last died a sincere penitent, in communion with the Catholic Church, in the year 1088. His heresy expired, and silently lay buried with him in the same grave, till after the lapse of some centuries the spirit of innovation called it forth again, and

¹ Apol. 2a. ² L. 4o. contra hæc. ³ Theodoret Dialogo 2do. ⁴ Lib. de Tri.
⁵ Cat. 4a. ⁶ Hom. in Matt. ⁷ De Sac. L. 4o. ⁸ Ser. 2o. Tom. 11. ⁹ Com. in
 Epis. ad Titum. ¹⁰ Ep. ad Rest.

strange to relate, a British parliament has set it up as a public test of civil orthodoxy. Without respect to the inviolable right of conscience, this test contains, in express terms, a solemn declaration which directly contradicts that of our divine Redeemer to his Apostles at the last supper.

SECTION VH.

Norman Conquest.

(A. D. 1066.) WE have seen Edward, the Confessor, chosen by the nobles of the land to succeed his half-brother, Hardicanute, in the British throne. His nephew, Edward the Outlaw, had certainly a nearer title; but he was then in Hungary, and to leave the throne vacant till his return, was thought to be attended with great political danger. The troubled state of the nation, the discontents of the English, the intrigues of the Danish faction, and the example of former times, justified the nobles in placing the uncle upon the throne. Edward's exaltation was acceptable to all parties; his descent from the old Saxon line, by his father Ethelred, endeared him to the English, and his being son of the same queen, Emma, as the late king Hardicanute, gained him the good will of his Danish subjects. The wise system of his government, making no distinction between English and Danes, gradually extinguished all animosity between the two nations, and by one common tie of interest encouraged them to emulate each other in their exertions for the public weal. By those, who judge of regal greatness from the pomp of enterprise and success in war, the meek piety of Edward may be thought more suited for a cloister than

a palace. But, on a close inspection of his character, they will find him possessed of virtues, which eminently qualified him for the government of a Christian nation. Having been inured from his youth to the hardships of adversity, he knew how to feel for the sufferings of others; he had spent near thirty years of his life in the court of Normandy, which gave him experience and a knowledge of mankind. Having no ambition but that of reigning in the affection of his subjects, he made his government as light and as easy to them as the public safety would admit. He imposed no new taxes, he took off some of the old ones. The odious tax of Danegelt, which his father Ethelred first imposed to redeem the kingdom from devastation, and which the Danish kings had since swept into the exchequer to enrich themselves, Edward generously remitted. His own private patrimony furnished him with the sums he wanted to discharge the obligations of justice, to reward desert, to relieve the indigent, and to answer the purposes of religious liberality.

The peace of Edward's happy reign suffered a short interruption from the political intrigues of Godwin, earl of Kent. This ambitious nobleman, whose immoderate wealth and popularity seemed to raise him above the rank of a subject, took upon himself to dictate to his sovereign. A partiality which the king was thought to shew to his followers from Normandy, furnished the earl with a plausible pretext for his insolence. His towering spirit aspired to the throne. With that view he had once proposed a marriage of his daughter Editha, with king Harold the Dane; and that the crown might be secured without a competitor to the issue of that marriage, he had even planned the murder of the two princes, Alfred and Edward, who were come from Normandy to England upon a visit to their mother,

Emma, the queen dowager. Alfred unfortunately fell into the assassin's hands and was murdered at Guilford, in his way to London. Edward made a speedy retreat into Normandy. His escape disconcerted Godwin's plan, and hindered the projected marriage between Harold and Editha. This accomplished lady, highly extolled by Ingulf, who knew her, for her amiable qualities, was, upon a reverse of fortune, given in marriage by her father to the very Edward whom he had intended to destroy. This connection rather increased than diminished the insolence of that haughty earl. Impatient of control, he levied war in order to force the king, his son-in-law, into such terms as he should please to dictate. But Edward, with all his meekness, and with all his piety, was not to be dictated to by an overbearing subject. Godwin's power sunk in the contest; he lost his titles and estates in punishment of his rebellion; but through the mediation of his friends, he recovered them again soon after. A sudden death in 1053, prevented him from plotting more mischief; his son Harold inherited his vast possessions, which he employed in paving himself a way to the throne.

Edward, on the other hand, was anxious to transmit the sceptre into the hands of a prince, who had an exclusive right to it. With this view he sent a solemn deputation to his nephew, Edward the Outlaw, still in Hungary, inviting him to come into England, that he might be ready on the spot to make good his claim to the crown of his ancestors. The prince, with his son Edgar, and two daughters, Margaret and Christina, arrived from Hungary in 1056, but died a few days after he landed. His son Edgar then became heir apparent, whom the Confessor ever treated as such, and to whom he gave the distinctive title of Etheling, designing him, beyond a doubt, for his successor in the

throne; nor can it, with any probability, be presumed that Edward, a lenial descendant of the ancient Saxon kings, could ever think of altering the succession in favor of a Norman, the known object of jealousy and dislike to the whole English nation. The story of a verbal promise or a written will, made by the Confessor, in Duke William's behalf, is treated by the critics as mere fiction, set forth by the Norman writers to justify the cause of an unwarranted invasion. No such promise has been ever proved, and no such will has ever been produced. The duke himself set up no other title than that of conquest; the public voice has distinguished him by no other appellation than that of William the Conqueror.

Edward, during his exile in Normandy, had made a vow of going in pilgrimage to Rome, as soon as an end should be put to the misfortunes of his family. Being settled on the throne, he thought the time was come for the accomplishment of his vow; he took the advice of his council upon the matter. The council decided that his absence would expose the kingdom to fatal danger, and intreated him to lay aside his design. The king consented to have the matter laid before the Pope, St. Leo IX. His Holiness judged it would be imprudent for the king to leave England in the present juncture, and, on that account, freed him from his vow, on condition that he distributed in alms to the poor, a sum equal to what he would have expended in his journey; secondly, that he should build or repair and endow a monastery for divine service, in honor of St. Peter. On receiving the Pope's brief, the pious king pitched upon a spot, lying to the west of London, where he erected that noble structure, called Westminster Abbey. It was the work of years; as soon as finished, it was solemnly consecrated on the feast of St. John the Evangelist, in 1065,

nine days before his death. He was taken ill while assisting at the ceremony of the dedication, and died on the fifth of January 1066, after a prosperous and religious reign of twenty-three years and some months.

Two aspiring competitors for the British crown had been long looking and long preparing for this event, Harold, the son of Godwin, and William, duke of Normandy. A third competitor was Edgar Etheling, the legal heir by descent. But the capacity of this weak prince was generally thought unequal to the task of governing an unwieldy nation; few came forward to urge his claim, nor did he himself shew any great inclination to enforce it. Harold immediately stepped into the throne without opposition, and, as it appeared, had the chief strength of the nation to support his pretensions. William of Normandy, who had already concerted measures with the continental powers, lost no time in providing himself with an army for the conquest of a kingdom, which Harold himself had promised to put him in possession of, upon the demise of king Edward. He first summoned Harold to perform his promise. Harold, as was expected, scornfully rejected the duke's demand, and prepared for war. The duke, by this time, had collected a numerous fleet of transports and other ships, with an army of sixty thousand chosen men, and only waited for a favorable wind to waft them to the English shore. On the eve of St. Michael, he sailed from the Norman coast, proceeded in good order, and disembarked his troops, without loss, and without opposition, at Pavensey, a village on the Sussex shore.

Harold mustered his whole force, and marched directly against the invaders, being determined, contrary to the advice of his friends, to risk his own and the kingdom's fate, upon the issue of a single battle. On the fourteenth of October, 1066, both armies met in a plain near the town of

Hastings. The night preceding the battle, had been spent in a very different manner by the two parties; by the Normans in acts of devotion and silent prayer, by the English in riot and disorder. The battle began with the dawn of day, and continued till sunset. The fall of Harold put an end to the contest. The conqueror marched straight to London, allowing the English no time to rally or to recover from their consternation. His unexpected presence struck terror through the people, the clergy and nobility, who were there assembled. They received him with some faint expressions of congratulation, declared him worthy of a kingdom, and made him a tender of the British crown. He seemed to demur at first, but was soon persuaded that the critical moment was not to be neglected. Preparations were immediately made for his coronation, which Aldred, the archbishop of York, performed in Westminster Abbey, on the twenty-sixth of December 1066.

SECTION VIII.

Despotism of the Norman Government.

(A. D. 1077.) **WILLIAM**, the founder of the Norman royal race in England, was the natural son of Robert, duke of Normandy, by Harlette, a tanner's daughter, from which circumstance he is surnamed the Bastard. At the age of nine years he succeeded his dying father, who, having no legitimate offspring, bequeathed to him his Norman title and estates. The Conqueror, for natural talents, for political and military abilities, may deservedly be ranked the first among the princes of that age. The French writers lavish

the most florid panegyrics upon his kingly and religious virtues. They exultingly pride themselves upon the honor which their country has acquired, in giving to England a new progeny of kings, the founders of her present grandeur, and of the mighty consequence she holds among the nations of Europe. They tell us that the rude Normans, within the space of a hundred and fifty years, were become polished Frenchmen; that England, in consequence of being conquered by them, emerged from a state of barbarism and ignorance, into an enlightened nation, and that religion began to blaze forth with fresh lustre. What grounds there are for this splendid boast, solid facts will shew better than empty declamation.

Under the Saxon kings, England saw a wise policy established, and wholesome laws enacted, which at once secured the administration of justice on the part of government, and preserved right order among the people. These laws, made at different periods, for the welfare of the state, under Ethelbert, Inas, Alfred, and Edgar, were collected and published with improvements, by the Confessor, and are known by the name of Edward's laws. The Conqueror found these laws universally respected and observed in the English nation; he acknowledged their excellency, bound himself by oath at his coronation to observe them, and finally confirmed them, though with some additions in favor of his Norman followers. History informs us that England had made considerable progress in the improvement of agriculture, of mechanics, and manufactures, long before any Norman landed on her shore. Mention has already been made of her public schools, for the education of youth, of her numerous monasteries, the fruitful seminaries of virtue and learning. Those foreign writers, who so freely stigmatize the English nation with the gross imputation of

barbarism and ignorance, in comparison of their accomplished Normans, surely forget, or never knew that England, besides her monastic depositaries of foreign and domestic records, had her university at Oxford; that the learned languages, Greek and Latin, were warmly cultivated, that ecclesiastical knowledge and the study of holy scripture were regularly attended to, that a constant intercourse, in fine, with the most polished nations, was industriously maintained. The English Saxons, as we have seen, had long before the conquest furnished France itself with masters, Germany with apostles, the Church with learned prelates, the calendar with eminent saints. They had ever been remarkable for a simplicity of manners, an honest confidence in one another, a hearty devotion, and a reverence for religion; all which began gradually to decline after the conquest. And if before that epoch England had had the misfortune to see her studies interrupted, and her morals tarnished by the interruption of barbarous invaders from the north, her misfortune was common with the other western and southern countries of Europe. England, within herself, possessed resources which enabled her to rise above misfortune; witness the prosperity of St. Edward's reign.

When the enterprising Norman embarked in his expedition against Harold, he held out to his surrounding followers the spoils of England as the reward of their labors; he pointed to the opposite shore, and in a firm tone exclaimed, 'There, my fellow soldiers, lies the field, in which you are to fix your establishment and erect trophies to your valour. He made his promise good. From the day that the chance of war placed him on the British throne, he considered the people of England as his slaves rather than his subjects; and began to treat them with that despotic rigor which he

thought the right of conquest gave him. Having the power of calling from the continent as many troops as he judged requisite to complete his oppressive plans, he created a military government, and reduced his new subjects to the most abject slavery. Insult added to oppression, galled the spirited nobles, and sometimes drove them into desperate acts of resistance. The Conqueror was not sorry to see those impotent insurrections, as they furnished him with a plausible pretext of levying new fines, and making new confiscations, either for the increase of his own royal domains, or for the reward of his military chieftains. By these measures, ancient and opulent families of the English nation were reduced to a state of indigence; degraded nobles experienced every sort of ignominy and contempt, while they beheld their castles and manors transferred to Normans and other foreigners. The despotic policy of William suffered no Englishman to hold any post of emolument or honor; his jealousy turned out every native from every office of trust. In less than nine years, death, or the Conqueror's high hand, removed every baron, bishop, and abbot of the English extraction from the kingdom, with the sole exception of St. Wolstan, the inoffensive bishop of Worcester. By the help of attainders, of fines, of banishment, and capital executions, William made himself the rich source of both property and honor. By the liberal distribution of titles and estates among the favorite Normans, he secured to himself the whole strength of the nation, and still reserved a competent portion to establish his own independent power. The appropriation of fourteen hundred and twenty-two manors, in different parts of the kingdom, furnished him with a more ample revenue than any king of England ever had before or since. Being thus above the reach of all law and control, he suffered none to dispute his

sovereign will with impunity. He ordered the Norman language to be taught in all the schools, all pleadings in the courts of judicature, all deeds to be drawn, and all laws to be composed in the same foreign idiom, that the English, with their loss of freedom, might likewise lose the use of their own native tongue.

But the most intemperate stretch of Norman despotism was the formation of a new forest near Winchester, the king's usual place of residence. Hunting was a sport in which Saxons and Normans equally took delight. The royal forests of England appeared not sufficiently extensive for the mighty Nimrod of a conquered country. He ordered the county of Hampshire, to the extent of thirty miles, to be laid waste for the preservation of game. Deaf to the cries of humanity, he drove the helpless inhabitants from their dwellings, took possession of their lands without making any compensation, destroyed villages, and sacrilegiously levelled many churches and convents to the ground. The promotion of Lanfranc to the vacant See of Canterbury, was but a small compensation for the great burdens he put upon the Church. Lanfranc, an Italian by birth, a Benedictine monk by profession, had distinguished himself by his literary abilities, and particularly by his writings against the errors of Berengarius. He first taught in the public schools that were opened in the monastery of Bec in Normandy, was then made abbot of St. Stephen's in Caen, and from thence advanced against his will to the archiepiscopal See of Canterbury, which he governed with pastoral zeal and prudence, for nineteen years. The Conqueror's hand lay heavy upon his English subjects to the very end. After a political and oppressive reign of twenty-one years, death summoned him, like other mortals, to appear before the awful tribunal of God, the sovereign Judge of conquerors

and of kings themselves. He left behind him three sons, Robert, William, and Henry. By will he bequeathed Normandy to the first, England to the second, and five thousand marks in money to the third.

SECTION IX.

St. Gregory VII. Pope, and Henry IV. King of Germany.

(A. D. 1074.) ~~Simony~~ and incontinence had struck deep root among the clergy of England, Italy, Germany and France. The evil began under those unworthy Popes, who so shamefully disgraced the tiara by their immoral conduct in the tenth century; the scandal spread, and had now continued so long, that the inferior clergy pleaded custom for their irregularities. Many even of the bishops were equally unfaithful to their vow, and with greater guilt. Hence the corrupt laity, being under no apprehension of a reproof from men as deeply immersed in vice as they, gave free scope to their passions. To stem the torrent of so general a licentiousness which then deluged the Christian world, required the zeal and fortitude of an apostle. Gregory VII., known by the name of Hildebrand, before he was raised to the Popedom, seems to have been destined by a special Providence for the arduous undertaking. This celebrated pontiff was born in Tuscany, educated at Rome, and professed a monk in the monastery of Cluni. Nature had endowed him with fine talents, which being cultivated by study, and adorned with virtue, were too bright to lie hidden in a religious cell. His reputation spread through Italy, France, and Germany. He preached with applause and

success in the court of the pious emperor Henry III.; Pope Victor II. employed him as his legate in France. His singular merit united the suffrages of all for his promotion to the pontificate upon the death of Alexander II., in 1073. Foreseeing the difficulties in which a faithful compliance with the pastoral charge would unavoidably engage him, he used his best endeavors to procure a new election, and even went so far as to intreat Henry, the king of Germany, to except against the choice made in his favor. He urged every reason which he thought likely to make an impression upon the king's mind, and, among other things, told him that the crimes, of which his Majesty stood guilty, were so public and enormous in their nature, that, should he be compelled to accept the office of sovereign pontiff, he could not in conscience let them pass without censure. His remonstrances had not the effect he wished; Henry approved and ratified his election.

Gregory, being thus placed in St. Peter's chair, not by faction or intrigue, as his enemies have slanderously said, immediately began to exert his authority for the extirpation of those scandalous vices which had long shocked all good men, simony and incontinence of the clergy. To remain silent or inactive amidst such disorders, he conceived would be to make himself a partner in the guilt. Experience had shewn him that lenient measures would produce no good. The inveteracy of the evil required a strong hand to root it up. The zealous pontiff, like another Jeremiah, undertook the work of reform with wonderful resolution and fortitude. No appearance of difficulties, no respect of persons, no apprehension of danger was capable of damping the courage, whenever his duty to God and the Church demanded his exertions. In every public transaction of moment, he previously laid the matter before his council, and acted

with their advice. Fixed in the resolution of putting a stop to the prevailing vices of the age, as far as he was able, he assembled a provincial synod of bishops to deliberate with him upon the most efficacious means of succeeding in the religious enterprise. With their approbation and advice, he published a decree in which he declared all persons, of whatever rank, who were guilty of simony, disqualified from holding any ecclesiastical benefice, and incapable of being invested with spiritual jurisdiction. Similar censures against the incontinent clergy were likewise denounced in terms equally strong.

Upon the publication of this decree, sullen murmurs began to rise on every side; from the many who felt themselves guilty, it met with violent opposition, especially in Lombardy and Germany. Their criminal resistance drew upon them fresh censures of suspension and excommunication. Tumults ensued in some parts of Germany; applications were made to the holy See for a mitigation in the decree. The subject was of too sacred a nature to admit a deviation from the ancient rule, and his Holiness had taken his resolution upon too pure a motive to be shaken in it.

Certain writers, better versed in the system of modern reformation, than in the primitive discipline of Christ's Church, represent this pontifical decree of Gregory VII. as a tyrannical act, and a strange attempt to impose a new obligation upon the clergy against their consent. In this short view of ecclesiastical history, enough has been produced, from authentic records, to shew that the celibacy of the clergy made a part of primitive discipline in the Church, and consequently that St. Gregory's decree enacted no new law, but only enforced an old one, which every clergyman knew he was bound to observe, from the moment he took higher orders.

Many of the German prelates seeing themselves involved in the censures pronounced by the sovereign pontiff against simony, and being by no means disposed to relinquish their rich benefices, had recourse to Henry, the king of Germany, for his support in a cause which equally affected their common interest. Henry, as we have seen, had the misfortune to lose his father when but five years old. His mother, Agnes, the empress dowager, undertook to govern in his name. His dutiful behavior for some years gave promising hopes of his becoming the imitator of his father's virtues. But being surrounded by wicked sycophants, the usual attendants of a court, he was persuaded at an early age to dismiss his mother, and to take the reins of government into his own hands. Being now under no control, he gave free scope to his passions, and ran headlong into vice. By his violent and imprudent conduct he quickly lost the confidence of his subjects, and provoked a war with the German princes. The Saxons rebelled; the dukes of Suiabia, of Bavaria, and Carintha took up arms to repel his usurpations. The pious empress Agnes retired from the tumultuous scene, to Rome, and made herself a nun to serve God in religious solitude, being equally disgusted with the vanities of the world, and the excesses of her deluded son. The zealous Gregory, from the time of his advancement to St. Peter's chair, never ceased to render to Henry the good offices of a friend and a father, as long as he had hopes of reclaiming him. In a language the most pathetic and persuasive, he admonished him of his Christian duty, expostulated with him upon the evil courses he had taken, exhorted him to repent, and solicited his concurrence for the extirpation of those public vices which had too long disgraced religion and the empire. Henry, at that time, had too much upon his hands to quarrel with the Pope. It was

his interest to dissemble, and even to promise what he never intended to perform. In his answer to the Holy Father, he humbly acknowledged and condemned his guilt, in selling the benefices of the Church, and by an abuse of power in bestowing the ecclesiastical livings upon persons wholly unfit. But no sooner was the storm dispersed, which had threatened to upset his throne in Germany, than he resumed his former habits and former violences against the Church. Experience had taught him, that the sale of bishoprics and abbeys was too lucrative a traffic to be tamely given up: he took the simoniacal prelates under his protection, and bade defiance to the grumbling thunders of the Vatican.

SECTION X.

Henry, defender of Simony and Schism.

(A. D. 1076.) HENRY and his schismatical associates had little hopes of carrying their point, as long as they saw Gregory in St. Peter's chair. They resolved to depose him. With that intent, they assembled at Worms, on the twenty-third of January, 1076. Opportunely for their extravagant undertaking, arrived a cardinal from Rome, called Hugh, whom the Pope had lately degraded on account of his scandalous immoralities. He came fraught with the desire of revenge, and provided with a long list of invented crimes against the Holy Father, which no witness had proved, and no man believed. He also produced a packet of forged letters, in the name of the cardinals of the senate and Roman people, containing complaints of the

simoniacal election, and demanding the deposition of Hildebrand from the papal throne. These apocryphal instructions to the diet being read, a formal accusation was thereupon exhibited against Hildebrand, styling himself Pope, and sentence of deposition was peremptorily pronounced without further ceremony. Two bishops ventured to object against the illegal mode in which the whole business had been conducted; incompetent judges, they said, have presumed, in despite of the canons, to accuse, to condemn and punish, not only a bishop, but the sovereign pontiff, in his absence, without the formality even of citing him to appear, or of notifying to him the grounds of accusation. They, however, signed the iniquitous sentence with the rest, who were present. To this mock sentence, Henry subjoined two insulting letters, commanding Hildebrand the monk, whom he no longer held for Pope, to quit St. Peter's chair, and to make room for one more worthy, whom he should appoint in due season. These letters he delivered to Roland, an ecclesiastic of Parma, with a strict charge to deliver them into the Pope's hands. He directed also other letters to the bishops of Lombardy and Ancona, inviting them to join in the Pope's condemnation.

The Pope, wholly ignorant of what had passed at Worms, had appointed the first week of Lent for holding his provincial council, according to annual custom. Roland, the king's messenger, so measured his journey as to enter Rome the evening before the opening of the council. Next morning he entered the church, where the Pope and bishops were assembled, and delivered his packet into the Pope's hands, declaring its contents aloud to the whole assembly. Great confusion arose; the bishop of Porto exclaimed, *Let him be taken into custody.* The officer of the guards advanced with his drawn sword, and would have despatched

the insolent man, if the Pope had not quickly interposed and saved him. As soon as silence and order were restored, the bishops began to deliberate on what was prudent to be done in the present emergency. There was but one opinion upon the matter, and it was that Henry, by his outrageous conduct, had forfeited his crown, had lost his claim to all future allegiance from the empire, and that the sentence of deposition and excommunication ought to be pronounced against him. On the following day the Pope appeared again in council, and, conformably to the advice of the bishops, assembled with him, pronounced sentence of excommunication against king Henry and his schismatical adherents; he moreover declared him fallen from his royal dignity, and his subjects no longer bound by their former oath of allegiance to him. Singular as the power may seem, which Gregory then exercised over the temporal right of kings, the general opinion of those times admitted, as the reader must observe, that such a power lay within the sphere of papal jurisdiction. The princes, and even Henry himself, were of that opinion, as his letter to Gregory, from Worms, expressly testifies.

His Holiness sent a copy of the sentence to the princes of Germany, accompanied with an exhortation to assemble and deliberate upon the choice of a new king. Many of the king's adherents now began to enter seriously into themselves; they acknowledged their error, repented of what they had done, and made their peace with the holy Sec. The princes assembled to take the present state of the empire into consideration. Whether Henry should be king or not, and whether the reigning evil could be redressed, while he remained in power, was the question in debate. The majority thought not. Henry saw his danger, sent deputies to them, and made them fair promises; he had

often done so before, and had as often deceived them. They at last came to this resolution, that if the king did not, within the twelvemonth, procure his absolution from the sentence of excommunication, they would proceed to depose him, and elect another in his stead.

The distressed king was now convinced that the only chance he had of saving his crown, was to reconcile himself with the holy See. In December, 1076, he set off from Spire, with a single attendant, for Italy, with a full determination to obtain absolution from the Pope at any rate, on which so much depended. The Pope had quitted Rome, and was advanced as far as Canusium, or Canosse, a castle in Lombardy, in his way to Germany, where the princes expected him. Henry, in a penitential garb, presented himself before the gates of the castle, humbly begging to be admitted into the Pope's presence, confessing his guilt, and, with every mark of sincere contrition, expressing his readiness to make all the satisfaction in his power to the injured church and state, could he only be absolved from his excommunication. The Pope, who more than once had experienced the insincerity of his protestations, kept him in suspense for three days, by way of trial; on the fourth he gave him an audience, received his submission upon certain conditions, and absolved him on the twenty-eighth day of January, 1077. His Holiness immediately despatched a messenger to inform the princes in Germany of this important reconciliation, and to desire that they would put off their election till he and Henry should join them in a full diet to terminate their quarrels. The messenger found the princes actually assembled at Forcheim in Franconia; the Pope pressed Henry to repair thither, and to fulfil his promises. Henry found excuses; he would not go himself, nor suffer his Holiness to go. The princes grew weary of delay, and finding noth-

ing good was to be expected from a faithless king, proceeded to an election, and on the fifteenth day of March chose Rodolph, duke of Suabia, for their sovereign.

Henry was not inclined to yield without a contest. The seeds of civil war were sown: the two competitors took the field; the war was carried on with various success for three years. Rodolph at last was slain in battle, and left his antagonist sole master of the empire.

Elate and fierce with victory, Henry renewed his violence against the Church. A crowd of simoniacal and deposed bishops surrounded his throne; at their instigation, he published anew the mock deposition of Pope Gregory, that had passed in the diet of Worms, in 1076, and set up Guibert, the excommunicated archbishop of Ravenna, in his room. The Pope, in consequence of this, renewed his former censures against Henry and his adherents. Henry, full of revenge, marched an army into Italy; his antipope, under the name of Clement III., accompanied him. When he came to Rome he found the gates shut against him. He began a siege; at the end of three years a bribe, more powerful than his arms, gave him entrance into the city. He took immediate possession of the Lateran palace caused his antipope to be enthroned, and was then crowned emperor by him in 1084. Gregory retreated into the castle of St. Angelo, and there remained secure from the insults of his persecutor, till Robert Guiscard, the valiant duke of Calabria, came to his assistance. At the duke's approach the emperor retired with his antipope into Lombardy, and from thence into Germany. Gregory was now master of Rome; but as the violence of party rendered it either unsafe or unpleasant for him to remain there, he removed first to Monte Cassino, and thence to Salerno, where he fell sick and died, in 1085. In his last moments he uttered

these words, "I have loved justice, and have hated iniquity: therefore I die in a strange land."

Two virulent invectives, replete with incoherent slanders against this illustrious Pope, have been transmitted to posterity by Cardinal Benno, an enraged schismatic, and devoted friend of Guibert, the antipope. Spanheim, Turretin, and other writers of the same malignant cast, have made copious collections from them. The most satisfactory refutation of those writers are the ten books of epistles, which St. Gregory has left us: they are an elegant and lasting monument of the eminent virtues that adorned his soul. "They are penned with much eloquence," says Du Pin,* a French author, whom no one suspects of being partial to this or any other Pope; "they are full of good matter, and embellished with noble and pious sentiments. Pope Gregory VII., it must be acknowledged, was a man of uncommon talents and unblemished morals, an enemy to simony and libertinism, well versed in the constitution of his predecessors, full of Christian thoughts, animated with zeal for the reformation of a corrupt clergy, constant and undaunted in the execution." If St. Gregory, in his censures against the boisterous Henry, who like a wild boar, in the scripture phrase, had broke into and was laying waste the vineyard of the Lord, is thought by the present age to have exceeded the bounds of his spiritual jurisdiction, it must be remembered, that he did but follow the general opinion of the age in which he lived.

A disgraceful end overtook his violent persecutor. Henry's obstinacy in schism kept up a strong opposition to his government in Germany. His two sons, Conrad and Henry, openly rebelled, and joined the discontented princes of the empire. Conrad died soon after his revolt; Henry

*Cent. ii. c. 1.

carried on the war, and forced his father to abdicate the crown. The dethroned monarch retired to Liege, where he died soon after, in 1106. As he died under the sentence of excommunication, his body lay above ground in a stone coffin for five years, without Christian burial, till his son, Henry V., had it carried to Spire, and deposited with pomp in the imperial vault.

SECTION XI.

St. Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury.

(A. D. 1093.) BESIDES the calamitous scandals brought upon the Church at that time by simony and incontinence, a sharp contest upon the subject of investitures was likewise carried on between the mitre and the crown. Investiture is a term employed to express the right and the act of investing persons with certain powers, either ecclesiastical or civil. The kings of Germany, of France; and England, claimed the privilege of conferring investitures upon the bishops and abbots elect within the realm, as a right belonging to the crown. When that royal claim was first set up, history does not inform us. But in the eleventh century, the claim was certainly new, and as it was exercised by the delivery of a ring and crosier, emblems of a spiritual commission, from the sovereign to the prelate elect, it wore a simoniacal appearance. The communication of spiritual jurisdiction cannot be derived from any other source, nor can it flow through any other channel than that which Christ has established. To no lay or civil potentate did the Divine Pastor of our souls give the commission to

feed his lambs and to feed his sheep; he gave it to Peter.* Upon this ground Pope Gregory VII. opposed and condemned the lay practice of ecclesiastical investitures, which had been one subject of quarrel, among many others, between him and king Henry IV. Henry persisted in his claim, against all the force of ecclesiastical censures, as long as he reigned; his son and successor, Henry V., equally persisted in the same claim till the year 1122, when he gave up the point to Callistus II., upon certain conditions, that were ratified by both parties in a diet held at Worms.

During the disputes between the ecclesiastical and civil powers upon the continent, England was sorely aggrieved by the tyranny of William II., surnamed Rufus, from his red hair. William ascended the throne upon the demise of his father, the Conqueror, in 1087. Of the many vices, which composed the character of this second king of the Norman race, the most enormous seems to have been the extortion of money, from which no respect for God or man could stay his sacrilegious hand. By an injustice, hitherto unknown in England, he usurped the revenue of vacant church livings, and put off the episcopal elections, that he might enjoy the rents. After the death of Lanfranc, in 1089, he would suffer no successor to be elected; and he even swore, that no one during his life should be appointed to the metropolitan See of Canterbury. The flock was four years without a pastor; the king fell dangerously ill; seeing himself upon the brink of a frightful eternity, he trembled at the prospect, and gave signs of repentance. To repair the public wrongs which he had committed, he ordered public justice to be done; he earnestly requested, among other things, that no time might be lost in providing

* John, c. xxi.

the See of Canterbury with a bishop. Anselm, a former disciple of Lanfranc, and then abbot of the monastery of Bec in Normandy, chanced to be in England at the time. He was mentioned to the king as a man eminently qualified for the high office of primate. The king ordered him to be introduced; he no sooner saw than named him for the See of Canterbury. The religious abbot humbly declined the honor. Several bishops were present; they all united in pressing him to accept the charge; he persisted in refusing it. The king earnestly besought him to consent, saying that the salvation of his miserable soul depended on it, and seriously promised that, in case of his recovery, all abuses should be redressed. Anselm still withheld his consent, till the bishops thrust a crosier into his hand, and forced him reluctantly to yield. The ceremony of his consecration was performed with great solemnity by the archbishop of York, on the fourth day of December, 1093.

The king recovered; his fair promises of amendment vanished with his sickness. Like most pretenders to repentance, who promise to relinquish sin, when they can sin no longer, Rufus relapsed into his former habits. The archbishop failed not to remind him of his Christian duty, and of the fair promises he had made. The admonition gave offence; the king grew angry, and took the resolution to put the archbishop out of the way of giving him any further trouble. He exhorted his nobles to disclaim him, he engaged the bishops not to acknowledge him for their metropolitan, and offered an annual pension to Pope Urban if he would but depose him. Under such circumstances, the afflicted primate judged that it could answer no good purpose for him to remain a silent spectator of growing disorders which he had not the power either to correct or prevent; he asked the king's leave to quit the kingdom, and to visit Rome.

The king after some difficulty gave his assent, which at once discarded a troublesome monitor, and left him free to sweep the archiepiscopal rents into the royal exchequer. The good bishop at parting gave the king his blessing, and they separated seemingly on amicable terms.

St. Anselm travelled as a poor pilgrim, accompanied by two monks, till he came to Rome, where he was received with very signal marks of kindness and distinction by Urban II. The schismatical Greeks had shewn some inclination of entering again into communion with the See of Rome. Urban agreed to meet them in council at Bari, a town in the territory of Naples; he took St. Anselm along with him. In October, 1098, a hundred and twenty-three bishops assembled to discuss the controverted points between the Latin and Greek Church. The Greeks began by proposing the question relative to the procession of the Holy Ghost; it was a question of faith; they erroneously asserted that he proceeded from the Father only. When they had said all they had to say upon the subject, Anselm, in consideration of his profound learning in theological questions, was called upon to speak in reply. He spoke with such force of argument, so clearly and so solidly to the point, produced such convincing proofs from scripture and the fathers in support of the Catholic doctrine, which asserts the procession of the Holy Ghost to be from the Father and the Son, that the Greeks had nothing more to object. They were silenced, but not reclaimed from their error.

Anselm accompanied the Pope to Rome, where he made some stay, and then repaired to Lyons, to his old friend the archbishop Hugh. There he received news of the king of England's death. The king was hunting in the new forest; a stag bounded from the thicket before him; Walter Tyrrel, a Norman gentleman of his train, let fly an arrow; the

arrow glanced from a tree and pierced the king's heart. Tyriel, seeing what he had done, galloped off with full speed to the sea shore, embarked for Normandy, joined the crusade, and was never heard of more. The king's bloody corpse was found on the spot where he fell, was conveyed to Winchester, and there buried without ceremony. Such was the untimely end of Rufus, without the grace of a moment's warning for repentance. His brother Robert being then engaged against the infidels in the holy land, Henry, the youngest of the three brothers, took advantage of Robert's absence, seized the reins of government, and caused himself to be crowned king, by Maurice, the bishop of London, in the year 1100.

To supply his defect of title to the throne, the new king began his reign by courting popularity. He recalled the archbishop Anselm, confirmed many privileges to the nation, and afterwards compounded with his brother Robert for the crown, by agreeing to pay him an annual pension. Anselm, soon after his return, held a synod at Westminster, in which he incurred the displeasure both of the king and many of the clergy, by the censures he pronounced against all such churchmen as kept their concubines, or received their investitures from the crown. The lay collation of investitures, as we have seen, was a late claim, which the king was not inclined to relinquish, and which the archbishop could not agree to, consistently with his duty to the spiritual powers of the Church, that had repeatedly condemned it under the severest censures. These censures equally affected the giver and receiver. The dispute became daily more and more serious. By the consent of parties, St. Anselm went to consult the Pope, Paschal II., the successor of Urban. Henry, on his part, sent deputies to urge his claim. His claim was not admitted to the extent he contended for.

Homage to the crown for temporalities depending thereon. Paschal allowed might be lawfully done, both by bishops, and abbots, and with that answer the king was satisfied. St. Anselm returned for the last time from the continent to his church of Canterbury in 1106, where he passed the last three years of his life in peace. His virtues gave him rank among the Saints; his theological tracts entitle him to a place among the doctors of the Church.

Besides St. Anselm and Lanfranc, who adorned England with their writings in the eleventh century, three other contemporary authors claim our notice; Eadmer, the disciple and faithful companion of St. Anselm in his travels; Osborne, precentor in the cathedral church of Canterbury; and Ingulf, abbot of Croyland. These authors, in a plain and unaffected style, have left us memoirs of the times in which they lived, or which immediately preceded them; they were men of character, men of judgment, men of veracity. Mr. Hume sometimes crowds his page with their names to strengthen his narrative, and sometimes vilifies them with the appellation of monkish writers. If he cites them as vouchers for facts regarding religion, it frequently is to make them say what in their memoirs they absolutely contradict. We have instanced it above in the account given us by the Scotch historian of Edgar and Edwi.

SECTION XII.

First Crusade.

(A. D. 1096.) IN the eleventh century, a romantic spirit of enterprise began to establish itself in Europe. The last weak princes of the Carlovingian race laid the foundation of those petty states, into which France and Germany were divided. The lords and governors of the provinces usurped to themselves the fragments of the mouldering empire, and assumed the title of independent potentates, according to the measure of their power. Elated by their princely situation, they were frequently at variance with each other, and were ever ready to embark in every military enterprise, where the lure of honor or of conquest invited them to arms. To set their Christian brethren free from the Mahometan yoke, and to wrest the holy land out of the hands of the Infidels, was an object suited to the temper of the times. It was no sooner proposed than embraced with all the enthusiasm which a genius for chivalry, stimulated by religion, is capable of inspiring.

The project of this holy war, as it is since called, originated with an obscure solitary of the diocese of Amiens in France. This devout man, known in history by the name of Peter the hermit, being long inured to the penitential exercises of an eremitical life, and impressed with a lively sense of gratitude for the inestimable benefit of redemption, resolved upon a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, that he might adore his Saviour upon the spot where he shed his blood, and rose again from the dead. To satisfy his devotion, the pious pilgrim made some stay in the city, daily visiting the holy sepulchre, in which our Redeemer's body had been laid, and bedewing it with tears. He waited upon Simeon,

the virtuous patriarch, in order to collect the best information he could of the state of religion in that country. The patriarch at first sight discovered in him the marks of goodness and of sound sense, entered into conversation with him, by means of an interpreter, and at some length described the wretched situation in which the Christians there were placed, by the tyranny and oppression of their Mahometan rulers. The good hermit wept at the account, and asked if nothing could be done for their relief. We once had hopes, replied the patriarch, of receiving succors from our former sovereigns, the emperors of Constantinople; but those hopes, he added, with a sigh, are now vanished, and we, in punishment of our sins, are left to groan under a load of miseries, without help, without comfort, and without hope. Were your sufferings only known to your Christian brethren of the west, subjoined the hermit, an armed confederacy might possibly be formed for your relief. Draw up a memorial to the sovereign pontiff of Rome, and to the princes of Europe, stating your grievances, and imploring their succor; I will undertake to present it. The patriarch was no less surprised than charmed to find such a generosity of sentiment in a lowly pilgrim; he lost no time in penning a memorial as Peter advised. Peter received it from his hand, and set off for Rome. At his arrival there, he found the Pope, Urban II., making preparations for his journey into France, where he had promised to preside in person at a council, in which some important points of ecclesiastical discipline were to be settled. Peter was announced to his Holiness, obtained an audience, presented the memorial of the venerable patriarch of Jerusalem, and received a gracious answer.

Urban left Rome and repaired to Clermont, in France, where a numerous council met according to appointment,

in November, 1095. Upwards of two hundred bishops assisted at it. When all the ecclesiastical business was despatched, his holiness communicated to the council the memorial which he had received from the venerable patriarch of Jerusalem. He made them an eloquent and pathetic discourse upon the subject, expatiated at large upon the cruel sufferings of the oriental Christians in Palestine, under the implacable enemies of Christianity. Open the eyes of your imagination, said his Holiness, and behold the Holy Land, which an incarnate God once consecrated by his presence, now occupied by Infidels; behold the churches of Jerusalem insultingly profaned by Mahometan superstition; behold, in fine, the sepulchre of our Lord, and all the holy places wantonly defiled by impious Mussulmen, the enthusiastic followers of a false prophet. Let us then exert our endeavors to unite the Christian powers of Europe in a general confederacy, for the rescue of our oppressed brethren, whose lamentable cry for help has reached these distant provinces of the west. The emotions which this discourse excited in the audience, were so quick and lively, that they all exclaimed as with one voice, "It is the will, it is the call of God."

The bishops departed for their respective dioceses; they published what had passed at Clermont, respecting the holy war; preachers mounted the pulpit, and invited such of their hearers as were fit for that service, to enlist under the banner of the Cross, which had for its object nothing less than the conquest of the Holy Land, and the deliverance of thousands from a state of servitude. It is incredible with what eagerness the invitation was every where heard and received by all ranks of men. Princes forgot their private quarrels to encounter the common enemy. The monk left his solitary cell, and the husbandman his plough, to become

a pilgrim or a soldier. From Germany, from France, and Italy, a motley multitude of different characters and dispositions crowded round their leaders, to share in their labors and perils, in the merit or licentiousness of this ill-digested enterprise. A straggling collection of undisciplined peasants and mechanics, with their wives and children, who accompanied the army, is said to have amounted to more than four hundred thousand souls. From such a mob, nothing but confusion and a vast consumption of provisions could be expected. Against this disorderly abuse, Urban had judiciously provided; but to the regulations he made for the preservation of discipline and order, little attention was paid, in the wild transports of enthusiasm. The number of military knights, in which the strength of the expedition really consisted, was about a hundred thousand. The most renowned names we find amongst them were Godfrey of Bouillon, duke of Lorraine; Hugh, surnamed the Great, brother to Philip I., king of France; Robert, duke of Normandy, brother to William II., king of England; Raymond, count of Toulouse; and Robert, earl of Flanders. A red cross, sewed upon the left shoulder of their upper garment, was their military badge, from whence is derived the term of Crusader and Crusade.

In the autumn of 1096, this unwieldy body began to move. They marched in three divisions, and by different routes, not to cause famine. In a long march through the extended countries of Germany, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania, to the banks of the Hellespont, they had many difficulties to encounter, and many obstacles to surmount, before the following spring. The whole country round the imperial city was covered with tents before the last division arrived. The devastation and violences they committed during their stay, disgraced the cause in which they were

engaged, and confirmed the Greeks in their opinion of the Franks. Alexis Comnenus, the emperor, had three years before solicited the Pope and princes of the west to send him succors against the Saracens, whose encroachments he was too weak to repel. His Holiness informed him that an armed confederacy in the west was formed for the conquest of the Holy Land, that an army was actually upon the march with that view, and that they were directing their course towards the straits of Constantinople, where they hoped to receive from his imperial majesty auxiliary aid for the success of their religious expedition. When Alexis saw such an inundation of Franks pouring along his territories, and so formidable a force encamped under the very walls of his capital, he began to apprehend that some hostile attack might possibly be in agitation against him. Their disorderly insults upon the churches and houses of his subjects, and the subsisting schism between the Latin and Greek Church, made him doubtful in what light he was to view them, whether as friends or enemies. Policy dictated to him not to provoke them. Their numbers awed him into acts of civility and seeming friendship, while he was determined within himself to contribute all he could towards their ruin. He gave directions that vessels should be prepared, with the utmost despatch, to convey them across the Hellespont, and to land them upon the Asiatic coast.

SECTION XIII.

Jerusalem delivered.

(A. D. 1099.) THE Christian army directed their march to Nice, the capital city of Bithynia, famous for the reception, it formerly gave to the fathers of the first general council. They besieged, and soon after took it by capitulation, in the name of the emperor Alexis. For such was their agreement, that the princes should conquer in the name and as vassals of the Greek emperor, on condition that he furnished them with provisions, ships and auxiliaries, to aid them in the conquest of Jerusalem. Alexis broke his promise, the princes thought themselves no longer bound by theirs. After the reduction of Nice, the Latins continued their march, and without much resistance reduced many places in Natolia, where they left garrisons, and appointed governors in their own name. Tarsus and the rest of Cilicia were in their possession, when Baldwin, the brother of Godfrey of Bouillon, led off a detached body of troops towards the north, and traversed a wide tract of country, all inhabited by Christians, till he came to the Euphrates. The Christian citizens of Edessa, in Mesopotamia, no sooner heard of his arrival, but invited him to come and take them under his protection. He went, and there established an independent principality, till it was subdued and entirely ruined by Noradin, the Turk, in 1144.

The main army, in the interim, took a more southern direction towards Syria. They soon found themselves embarrassed in a desolated waste, which afforded no subsistence for man or horse. No armed enemy appeared before them, but famine, a mortal foe, quickly overtook them. Most of their horses either died for want of forage, or were

slain for the food of men; thousands of the men sunk under the accumulated weight of sickness and fatigue. The survivors pushed forward with unshaken resolution till they entered Syria. Antioch, a strong city, the capital of the province, challenged their attention. In a council of war, it was thought unsafe to leave so important a place behind them in the hands of the enemy; the tedious formality of a siege was resolved on. The attack and defence was supported with equal obstinacy on both sides for seven months, when a Greek renegado offered to let the besiegers in, upon condition that Boemond, the son of Robert Guiscard, the Norman duke of Calabria, should have the sole command of the city. It was agreed; the Christians took possession on the third of June, 1098; Boemond, by common consent, was acknowledged sovereign of Antioch and its dependencies, with the title of prince.

After the hardships of a long march, succeeded by the labors of an obstinate siege, it was judged prudent to let the army rest before they proceeded any farther. The princes also required time to consider and arrange the ecclesiastical as well as the civil concerns of that patriarchal See. The bulk of the people was Christian; composed of Catholics, Nestorians, and Eutychians; the rest were Mussulmen. A Catholic patriarch of the Latin rite was appointed. In making these arrangements, and in reducing to their obedience some neighboring places, which were thought necessary for the security of their conquests, a year elapsed. About the end of May, 1099, the army was in motion; they marched through the plains of Palestine without molestation, and without seeing an enemy, till they came within sight of Jerusalem; the walls and towers of which presented to them the appearance of a town strongly fortified, and with the additional works of defence, lately made

by the Saracens, in a state of standing a siege for many months. The crusaders carried it by storm at the end of five weeks. Duke Godfrey was the first who entered the city, the whole army followed him; the carnage that ensued in the enthusiastic glow of victory, is not to be described; it shocked the conquerors themselves, when looking round they beheld the streets covered with heaps of slaughtered infidels. More Christian sentiments then stifled the first motions of revenge; they sheathed the sword, and putting off the bloody armor, devoutly went in their pilgrim dress, to pay their grateful homage to God in the church of the holy sepulchre. The fifteenth of July, 1099, was the day which put the Christians in possession of Jerusalem. The object of the Crusade was accomplished. The first eight days were employed in joyful acts of thanksgiving and devotion.

The princes then assembled to settle a regular form of government, and to give stability to their conquest. A kingly government seemed best suited for the purpose. By a plurality of votes, Godfrey of Bouillon, a prince no less commendable for piety than for valour, was chosen king. The choice did honor to his merit, while it imposed a weighty charge, by raising him to a station beset on every side with difficulties and perils. The king turned his first attention to the re-establishment of divine worship. He began by founding two chapters of canons for the Church service, one in the church of the sepulchre, the other in that called the temple. The patriarch Simeon was gone to Cyprus to collect arms, and as he did not appear again, a Latin patriarch, after the lapse of some months, was elected.

The kingdom of Jerusalem at that time held out to its possessor little more than an empty title, a mere phantom of kingly pre-eminence; it possessed no riches, no power,

no subjects, nor any other advantage that could excite or gratify ambition. The small towns of its dependence were but few, and separated from one another by a country still in the hands of a powerful enemy. The city had no resources within itself, nor was it provided with sufficient troops to repel any considerable force, which the infidels might any day send against it. The other princes having acquitted themselves of their vow, had no temptation to remain in a foreign land; they hastened back to Europe with the poor remains of their surviving followers, and left Godfrey with no more than three hundred horse, and two thousand foot, to defend his crown as he could.

By modern writers, the eleventh and four preceding centuries, are contemptuously styled the darker ages. The appellation originated with certain literati of the fifteenth century, a Laurentius Valla, a Platina, and an Angelus Politianus. These polished humanists, better acquainted with the rules of profane eloquence than with the sacred principles of religion, relished no compositions but those of ancient Greece and Rome. Hence they looked down with a supercilious eye upon the productions of the middle ages, and conceitedly concluded that all real learning lay buried under a heap of barbarism and ignorance, because the study of the classics was then less cultivated than it had been at a former period. The slashing reformers of religion in the following century caught the sound, and confounded classical knowledge with the knowledge of religion, falsely presuming, that the failure of one involved the failure of the other. The knowledge of true religion never failed, though conveyed in a language less studied and less correct. The great Apostle made profession of employing no sublimity of language, and no persuasive turns of human eloquence, when he announced the doctrines of Christ crucified.

to the Corinthians. Though little versed in the flowing periods of Cicero or Demosthenes, and strangers, perhaps, to the fine strains of Virgil and of Homer, the pastors of the Church, even in the middle ages, never neglected the study of the holy scriptures and primitive fathers, from whence they drew that sacred knowledge which enabled them to lead the faithful flock of Christ in the path of salvation, the sublime end and object of religion. To those, who are not wilfully blind, it must then appear, that the picture of those dark times, as they are termed, is much overcharged with shade to be a true representation. The unextinguished lamp of faith gave its usual light; during that period it diffused its rays on England, Holland, Saxony, Denmark, Sweden, Hungary, Poland, Russia, and other provinces of the north. By the preaching of apostolical missionaries, those countries emerged from the dark shades of idolatry, at a time when all Europe is supposed by pedantic grammarians to have been absorpt in the abyss of profound ignorance. If a passing cloud of immorality eclipsed the virtues of some particular churches in France, in Germany, in Italy and England, the eclipse was partial; it roused the zeal of Christ's faithful ministers, who, by their vigorous exertions, removed the abuse, and restored the sacred ministry to its primitive purity.

